

Великая Отечественная: Неизвестная война
Марк Соловьев



**23 ИЮНЯ:
«ДЕНЬ М»**



Abstract

The new work of the popular historian, who became famous for his previous sensational books "June 12, or When did the Great Patriotic War begin?" and "On peacefully sleeping airfields."

Continuation of historical bestsellers sold out with a record circulation comparable to the circulation of Viktor Suvorov's books.

A large-scale and fascinating study of the tragic events of the summer of 1941. Involving

a huge number of authentic documents of that time, comprehensively analyzing the history of the military-technical preparation of the Soviet Union for the Great War and pre-war strategic planning, the author comes to a stunning conclusion - in June 1941, Hitler, without even expecting it, outstripped Stalin's blow by exactly one day.

“Let me express my gratitude to Mark Solonin, take off my hat and bow to the ground to this man ... When I read his book, I understood Salieri's feelings. Tears flowed from my eyes - I thought: why didn't I get to this? .. It seems to me that Mark Solonin accomplished a scientific feat and what he is doing is a golden brick in the foundation of the history of the war that will someday be

written...”

*(From an interview **with Viktor Suvorov**)*

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Mark Solonin

June 23: "Day M"

"The most valuable thing in the Red Army is the new man of the Stalin era. He has a decisive role in the battle. Without it, all technical

means of struggle are dead,

in his hands they become a formidable weapon."

clause 6 of the Field Regulations of the Red Army

FOREWORD

"Modern writers like Solonin take only one side in their books. That everyone fled, dropped their weapons and fled. But if Solonin had been right, then we would have been defeated. This is the logic of life, the logic of historical events, and if people do not see this, it is useless for them to deal with history."

M. A. Gareev,

interview with RIA-Novosti agency

What can I say to that? Makhmud Akhmetovich Gareev, President of the Academy of Military Sciences, Academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Military Sciences (there are, imagine, such doctors), Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, former Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Army for scientific work and "the ruler of other lands" sits high, looks far away, and therefore studies history with great benefit. For myself personally. The party and the government generously appreciated his contribution to the development of Soviet military history. Mahmud Akhmetovich, among other things, was awarded the title of "general of the army." For those who have forgotten, I remind you that this is the last step before the top, on which the marshal stars shine. At one time, in the rank of army general, K. Meretskov and G. Zhukov led the General Staff of the Red Army, and of the five commanders of the troops of the western border districts of the USSR, only one (D. Pavlov) had such a high rank in June 1941. Army General Gareev also

had a chance to take part in the leadership of large groupings of troops. In 1970–1974 he served as Chief of Staff of the Chief Military Adviser to the Egyptian Army Command. Under his direct leadership, a grandiose operation was planned and carried out, which went down in history under the name "Doomsday War"

(October 1973). This war, as you know, ended with the decisive and extraordinary actions of the Soviet Union then saving Egypt from complete defeat (although the Egyptian soldiers - in full accordance with the "logic of life" - threw down their weapons and ran, not wanting to pay for Brezhnev's adventures with their only lives) . The last time General Gareev was distracted from scientific work was in 1989. Then, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, he was appointed chief military adviser to the government of Najibullah. The inexorable "logic of historical events" led the puppet Kabul regime to collapse. For Najibullah himself, this story ended with the death penalty, and Mahmud Akhmetovich returned to Moscow and received the Order of Lenin. It would seem that the personal experience of participating in the Middle East and Afghan wars should have most clearly convinced General Gareev that neither a huge numerical superiority nor an overwhelming technical superiority can save an army whose soldiers do not want to fight. Alas, the "useful studies" of Soviet history prevented Comrade Gareev from seeing and recognizing this simple "logic

life."

To be honest, I (and not only me) became aware of the name of M. A. Gareev only thanks to V. Suvorov, who in his book "The Last Republic" gave several examples of the amazing ignorance of the main military historian of the USSR. Since then, such pearls as "the opium of war" and "38-ton tanks" (in such an unpretentious way our academician deciphered the German designation of the Czech-made light tank Pz-38 (t) three times) have become a walking anecdote in the narrow circles of military historians. Bearing in mind, however, that it is not worth scolding what I have not personally read, I decided to leaf through the most recent ("post-perestroika") works by MA Gareev. Yes, yes, it is the "most recent". The fact is that, despite his venerable age (his 80th birthday was celebrated in 2003), General Gareev is not the former, not "honorary", but the most current president of the Academy of Military Sciences. The official biography of the outstanding scientist contains a mention of 250 (!!!) published scientific papers ... From the

very first minutes of reading it became clear that Mahmud Akhmetovich does not grow old in soul and does not "change principles". Which is

deserves all respect. And who would not be pleased to be transported, at least mentally, at least with a book in hand, to the unforgettable years of pioneer childhood? Dozens and hundreds of pages of text are filled with general reasoning, only occasionally interrupted by such specifics: “ *The Soviet Armed Forces defeated 507 Nazi divisions and 100 divisions of Germany and its allies ... On the Soviet-German front, the main part of the Wehrmacht's military equipment was destroyed: over 70 thousand aircraft, about 50 thousand tanks and assault guns, more than 2.5 thousand warships, transports and auxiliary vessels.* ”

Strongly said. 507 divisions. When did Germany have an army of this size? Does the chief military historian of Russia know how many people and horses, artillery pieces and trained commanders were required to complete one Wehrmacht infantry division? How many people in the corps and army units, in the rear, transport, sanitary services should ensure the combat work of this division? In the spring of 1940, there were 156 divisions in the entire German land army. On June 22, 1941, 115 Wehrmacht divisions and SS combat units were concentrated on the western border of the Soviet Union as part of the Army Groups North, Center and South. In the future, the grouping of German troops on the Eastern Front increased by dozens of divisions, but by no means at times. And what is most remarkable - after two paragraphs, Gareev (or those graduate students who wrote the next, 251st “scientific work” for him) reports: “In June 1944, the 181.5 *German division acted against the Soviet Army ... Before the final campaign In 1945, Soviet troops had 179 German divisions against them.* Where and when was “507 Nazi divisions” defeated? I would not like to guess, but maybe the doctor of military sciences meant something like: “the losses of German troops on the Eastern Front during the four years of the war were so great that 507 divisions could be equipped with this number of personnel”? Not to mention the fact that such an approach to assessing the size of the enemy army is only appropriate in the wall newspaper of a knitting factory, the numbers again do not converge, 507 Wehrmacht infantry divisions are 8 million people, and all irrevocable (killed, missing, captured) losses

Wehrmacht and SS combat units for 6 years of war on all fronts (!) are estimated at about 4.6 million people.

One of two things: either the typewriter or the adding machine of Academician Gareev is broken. His curvimeter is not in the best condition either. Please do not flinch - this is such a stick with a small wheel at the end. Using this device, the length of curved lines on a geographical (topographic) map is measured. Why am I? And here's what: *"Unprecedented in history was the spatial scope of the armed struggle on the Soviet-German front. From the very first days, it deployed here on lines stretching over 4,000 km."* In the first days of the war, the Wehrmacht advanced on the front from the mouth of the Neman in the north to the Carpathian Mountains in the south. From Klaipeda to Sambir. This is about 800 km in a straight line. But the border before the war (and the front line after it began) was not straight. This is a bizarrely winding curved line. Its length was measured long before the first gun salvos on the border. The results have been published hundreds of times. I remind you: the North-Western Front (8th and 11th Armies) - 300 km, the Western Front (3rd, 10th, 4th Armies) - 470 km, the South-Western Front (5th, 6 -I, 26th Army) - 410 km. Total - 1180 km of the front. Rounded - 1200, but not 4000. Okay, let's assume that there is no serviceable curvimeter in the Academy of Military Sciences. This I can well admit. But does the general of the army, the deputy chief of the General Staff of a huge country, really not understand that with his phrase about "4 thousand km of the front" he flogged himself more painfully than the ill-fated non-commissioned officer's widow? Mahmud Akhmetovich, how many troops do you need to have for a successful offensive on a front of 4 thousand kilometers? Will those "507 divisions of the Wehrmacht" that your referents counted be enough for such a great feat? Is there not a single copy of the pre-war Field Manual of the Red Army (PU-39) in the entire Academy of Military Sciences? Paragraph

98 this of the fundamental document provides for the following density of formation of combat formations during the offensive: *"When attacking heavily fortified zones and SD - 2 km for a division, in secondary directions - from 5 to 6 km."* Even if we consider the indestructible borders of the Soviet Union, along which 15 fortified areas were formed (Telshyai, Shauliai, Kaunas, Alytus, Grodno, Osovets, Zambrovsky,

Brest, Kovelsky, Vladimir-Volynsky, Rava-Russky, Strumilovsky, Peremyshlsky, Verkhne-Prutsky and Nizhne-Prutsky), a miserable "secondary direction", which is covered by a third-rate army, then in this case, an offensive on a front of 4 thousand km is required 666 divisions. Where were they to be taken? Well, let's agree that the PU-39 is not mandatory for Wehrmacht commanders. Let's see how the Germans fought in practice.

On May 10, 1940, the German command concentrated 77 divisions on a front about 350 km long. The average operational density is 4.5 km per division. Average. On the direction of the main attack, in the 130-km zone from Liege to Sedan, two German armies (4th and 12th) were advancing, consisting of 23 infantry, 7 tank and 5 motorized divisions. Operational density - 3.7 km per division. Two weeks later, from 10 to 24 May, German tanks reached the English Channel, covering 300–350 km. The average advance rate of motorized formations was 26 km per day. Domestic historians to this day do not hesitate to call it "the triumphal march of the Wehrmacht in France." If we believe Academician Gareev, then in June 1941 the Wehrmacht advanced (and even faster!) On a front 11 times longer, while having only 1.5 times more divisions. How did this become possible if M. A. Gareev resolutely rejects the version that the soldiers and commanders of the Red Army *"dropped their weapons and fled"* ? After such "pearls", the completely enchanting phrase that the

general list of *"destroyed military equipment of the Wehrmacht"* included *"70 thousand aircraft"* (this figure is at least five times higher) and even *"2, 5 thousand warships, transports and auxiliary vessels."* Even Baron Munchausen, flying on a cannonball over the Black and Baltic Seas, could not have found so many German warships there. The reason for this is extremely simple: there were no large ships in the Black Sea at all. Turkey, while remaining loyal to England and the USSR, did not allow the passage of the German fleet through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as a result of which only what could be transported from Germany to Romanian ports by rail sailed under the red flag with a fascist swastika in the Black Sea: midget submarines, torpedo boats, collapsible

landing barges, collapsible self-propelled ferries, etc. There was something to drown in the Baltic, but there was no one to drown. From the very first hours of the war, the Red Banner Baltic Fleet was "locked" by German minefields in the Gulf of Finland, and after the ill-fated "Tallinn crossing" and the loss of all bases, except for Leningrad (Kronstadt), blocked from land, the battle path of the KBF was by and large completed. As for the actual number of enemy warships destroyed by the Soviet fleets, the overall picture is something like this. In 1957, a secret report was prepared on the combat operations of the Soviet Navy, which stated that during the entire war, 17 German destroyers and 6 ships of a larger class (cruisers, coastal defense battleships) were sunk on all seas. True, with a more thorough study of these figures, which became possible only in post-Soviet times, it turned out that most of the "destroyed enemy warships" were either blown up and flooded by the crews themselves on the eve of Germany's surrender, or were sunk by Allied aircraft, or even at all sailed safely until the age of 50-60. The bottom line is 7 actually sunk destroyers, 1 cruiser and 1 Finnish coastal defense battleship. Of course, such meager results of the combat activities of the huge Soviet fleets (3

battleships, 7 cruisers, 54 leaders and destroyers, 212 submarines, 22 patrol ships, 80 minesweepers, 287 torpedo boats, 260 batteries of coastal artillery as of June 22, 1941) Soviet military-historical science could not be arranged. The situation was corrected in the traditional way for this "science" - with the help of the union "And". This method is both universal and effective: "In the course of air strikes against enemy columns, 736 tanks, armored personnel carriers AND horse-drawn vehicles were destroyed." At sea, a great many "*warships, transports, and auxiliary vessels*" were sunk. If we include in the last category all pleasure boats, fishing scows and lifeboats on which hundreds of thousands of refugees (2 million according to German historians) tried to leave the encircled East Prussia and Pomerania in the spring of 1945, then any result could be obtained. But the academy of comrade Gareev decided (or was instructed from above) to stop at the "modest" figure of 2.5 thousand.

Absolutely sincerely wishing Mahmud Akhmetovich to celebrate his 90th birthday in good health, surrounded by grandchildren and great-grandchildren, I, as an ordinary citizen of Russia and a good taxpayer, cannot agree that the temple of science, which the Academy of Military Sciences should have been, has been turned to a closed elite almshouse for nomenklatura pensioners. I'm such an evil

Salieri. "I don't find it funny when the
painter is insignificant It stains
Raphael's Madonna for me. I don't find it
funny when the buffoon is

despicable Parody dishonors Alighieri ... " The only thing that makes me laugh a little is when comrades Gareev and Co. start loudly indignant: "Stop rewriting history!" What to rewrite? What "story"? Your deliberately false fabrications about 507 German divisions and 70,000 downed aircraft, about a "surprise attack" and "hopelessly outdated" Soviet tanks, about a purely peaceful Stalinist empire and a multiple numerical superiority of the enemy? If we are talking about a scrupulous and unbiased study of the events of the Great War, then how can one rewrite what is just beginning to be created? And the last remark before proceeding

to the presentation of the main material. There is one subtle nuance that many sincerely do not understand, and some consciously speculate on this. There are two words in Russian: "impassionate" and "impartial". Despite the great similarity in spelling, these are different words. And they have completely different meanings. The

totalitarian communist regime was indeed bloody and anti-people. Sooner or later, but his immeasurable crimes will be recognized and condemned even in the country where this deadly infection came from all over the world. How the Stalinist regime unleashed a world war, how he threw the Soviet people into this war, is perhaps the bloodiest of his crimes. Only an electronic machine can study these events, write about them without emotional excitement, dispassionately. This is not given to man. And here it is not necessary to lie at all. And there is no need - reality almost always turns out to be scarier and brighter than any fiction. So

that there is no direct connection between the passion in the presentation of the material and the biased selection of facts "convenient" for the author alone. It does not exist in historical research, nor does it exist in everyday life. Each of us, based on our own life experience, knows that there are passionate, emotional natures, who, however, will not take someone else's penny. There are also absolutely phlegmatic, eternally imperturbable crooks and scoundrels. So far, no connection between emotions and theft

has been found. But there is a connection between the political convictions of the author and the authenticity of his work. And very noticeable. It is today that we somehow forgot that quite recently Comrade. Gareev and his colleagues, without a shadow of embarrassment, called themselves "fighters of the ideological front." We were taught - and we resignedly agreed with this - not to remember that some (many? All?) Communist "historians" were also part-time employees of one well-known office, which (have you already forgotten about this?) again without a shadow of embarrassment called itself "the armed detachment of the party." And in war, dear, as in war. To tell the truth is a betrayal. To deceive is a matter of valor and heroism. I have no doubt that Comrade Gareev, signing the text compiled by his subordinates about "507 defeated divisions of the Wehrmacht and 70 thousand downed aircraft," did this with a clear conscience, with the consciousness of a fulfilled party duty. "Sang the feat of a soldier of the Red Army. He gave a worthy rebuff to the bourgeois falsifiers, belittling the historical role. Contributed to the communist education of youth ... "

Being a person of democratic, "Western", liberal convictions, I do my job differently. I simply have neither

moral nor material incentives to lie to you, dear reader. Not only do I not hide my views, but I tell you directly and clearly on the very first pages of the book. Yes, I'm not one of those. I am one of those. On the following pages you will be presented not only (and not so much) conclusions as arguments and facts. Links to the source at each significant figure. Those who wish can check, although I honestly and sincerely advise you - do not waste time in vain.

Part 1

SOVIET COLOSS

Chapter

1 THE MAIN CAUSE OF DEFEAT

According to the generally accepted order, a chapter with this title should have appeared at the end of the book dedicated to the events of the 41st year. But, having learned from the bitter experience of writing and publishing the previous two books, I decided not to take any more risks. Don't put up. Somehow it turns out that the noisiest part of the readers, not having the patience to read the text to the end (or to the middle, or beyond the 10th page), immediately drops the book and picks up a pen. For example, the well-known journalist L. Radzikhovsky has been terrorizing me with three thousand tanks for the second year. It all started with the fact that on June 22, 2005, Mr. Radzikhovsky decided to tell the educated public about my modest work. Briefly designating the author of the book that excited him "*some amateur historian from Samara whom I don't know*", the venerable master of the pen

said that Solonin had brought many new and interesting facts. In particular, the latest T-34 and KV tanks at the beginning of the war in the Red Army were, it turns out. 3 thousand units. A very interesting fact. The number of tanks in the army turned out to be almost twice as many as they were made at the factories. A year has passed. All my attempts to contact Mr. Radzikhovsky and ask him to open my book on page 499 were unsuccessful. The next sad anniversary came - June 22, 2006. Mr. Radzikhovsky again needed to write an "article by the date." You will still laugh - but he again remembered "*a certain amateur historian from Samara, some unknown Mark Solonin*" and again informed the city and the world "about the 3,000 newest T-34s and KVs allegedly found by me. What was it? In all editions of the book "Barrel and Hoops" (the marketing service of the EKSMO publishing house replaced the author's title with a more, from their point of view, understandable to readers "June 22"), starting from 2003, there is Appendix No. 2 on the last pages. This is a table, in which I listed all 20 Red Army mechanized corps that took part in the fighting in the first weeks of the war. For each mechanized corps, the numbers of the tank and motorized

divisions, the number of tanks is indicated, "old types" - separately, the latest **T-34 and KB** - separately. The figures are summarized by fronts and directions. The total number is also indicated: **12,379 tanks**, including **1,600 T-34s and KVs**. The number is in bold. Probably, Mr. Radzikhovsky did not have time to scroll through the book of the "amateur from Samara" to the penultimate page. And what is most (for me personally) surprising is that for a year and a half no one wanted to correct this absurdity, although both articles by Radzikhovsky were

vigorously discussed on the Web. *"Everyone has enemies in the world, but God save us from friends..."* Some unknown to me Andrei Krotkov decided to praise me on the pages of Nezavisimaya Gazeta. Or work off your pieces of silver on the false use of my name for indiscriminate criticism of V. Suvorov (which criticism the so-called "independent newspaper"

loves very much). It turns out that *"using the documents of the defense departments, Solonin proves the main thing - there were no plans for a preemptive strike" (the main collision on which all the books of Viktor Suvorov are built) were. There was and was carried out (very poorly) a plan for strategic deployment and mobilization cover.* A person who has read my book - or at least is familiar with military terminology - from such "pearls" glasses and hair will stand on end. Stalin's plans for the invasion of Europe are devoted to at least three chapters in my book. One of them is called: "Your last hour is coming, bourgeois." For complete clarity, a color map of southern Poland with red arrows pointing west is attached. Why are you more? But Mr. Krotkov continues to "praise" me: *"There are a lot of figures in Solonin's book, and they deserve trust ... It's enough to feel the figure: in 4 years the country lost 43.5 million citizens killed and died. fifth of the population."* There are really a lot of numbers in Solonin's books. And they certainly deserve trust. But why add such bullshit to these figures? I confess that I did not at all expect to encounter the fact that we have much more writers than readers (by the

latter term I mean a person who is able to read and adequately perceive a text written in a simple way, without the slightest claim to

scientism, in Russian). My first book was subtitled: "When did the Great Patriotic War start?" The question mark is not a typo. This is the main question, for the answer to which nearly 500 pages have been written. In order for the most important thing not to pass by the attention of the reader, I: - duplicated the question in the title of the last part of the book, -

placed a specific answer literally on the last lines of the last chapter, and - highlighted in bold type: "autumn 1942 - spring 1943. " A few paragraphs above

are the arguments in favor of such an answer. I assumed that the methodology I proposed (analysis of the structure of personnel losses, the percentage of sanitary and irretrievable losses) would seem strange, erroneous, claiming inappropriate extravagance, etc. to some of the readers. I was ready for a discussion on this topic - but I and did not wait. Apparently, a rare woodpecker will reach the 490th page, but this woodpecker (contrary to the laws of nature) is always ready to crow something awkward. For example, A. A. Kilichenkov, Associate Professor of the Department of Contemporary National History of the Russian State University for the Humanities, published ("New Historical Bulletin",

No. 15) a huge devastating review in which he was long and painfully indignant at the "hypothesis of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War on June 17", which Solonin allegedly put forward. Well, everything is clear with the assistant professor of the department of national history - it is said about such people: "I was delivered from the mind by the rank." Something else surprises and upsets: even some of the normal people who discussed my book (in print and electronically) reported that, *"according to Solonin, the Great Patriotic War began on June 17, 1941."* The origin of this date is clear to me: the first chapter of the book was called "Tuesday, June 17." Himself to blame. I did not think that the "writers" are always in a hurry and they will have no time to read the second and subsequent chapters. One comrade simply shocked me with the news that, according to Solonin, the war began after the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. As far as I remember, among the 138 thousand words that make up the full text of the book, the word "pact" (and everything connected with it) is not mentioned even once. The modern historian A. Isaev read my book, saw ... and expressed his indignation at the fact that *"the date*

M. Solonin considers the actual beginning of the Great Patriotic War to be the events of the period of the Civil War and the collectivization and repressions that followed it. Strongly said...

In all this, I decided on the very first pages of the first chapter to inform all the "writers" that I know the main reason for the defeat of the 41st year. I unequivocally admit. There is no need to argue with me on this subject. Without any additional evidence, I fully agree that: **the armed enemy was the main reason for the defeat.** I confess that I myself did not think of it

before. It was suggested to me by critics. And after repeated hints, I did not immediately understand - what do they mean? For example, the already mentioned A. Isaev angrily pointed out to me that the Red Army did not collapse on its own. *"It was demolished by soldiers in fieldgray uniform."* What the word "feldgrau" means, I can still guess ("field gray", the color of the Wehrmacht soldiers' tunics, this was usually translated into Russian as "mouse", but Mr. Isaev likes to demonstrate his acquaintance with "foreign sources"). It was more difficult to understand the hidden meaning of the criticism. Of course, it didn't collapse on its own. The barrel also does not fall apart by itself, but only after the hoops are knocked down from it with a strong blow. But on the battlefield (operations, wars) two armies collide. Otherwise, this is not a battle and not a war. The presence of an enemy "in field gray uniform" (or in any other form) should not, it seemed to me, be considered an emergency situation for war. And the Red Army was created, armed, equipped not only for parades, but above all so that any enemy army would fall apart in a collision with it. *"Any enemy will break his copper forehead on the Soviet border pillar"* (from Molotov's speech at the opening of the 18th Congress of the CPSU (b)). A. Isaev expressed himself politely. But it's not clear. An

unnamed critic on one of the Internet sites expressed himself rudely, but intelligibly. *"The author is an idiot. He does not understand that those 66,900 guns and mortars that he writes about were not abandoned, but lost during O-T-S-T-U-P-L E-N-I-I.* So I wrote. Breakdown. And I immediately understood what they wanted from me. They want to explain to me that if there had been no war, the Red Army would not have lost a single gun. And if in the event of a war

the enemy did not interfere with the advance, then even then the Red Army would not have lost so much military equipment. But the enemy brazenly, unceremoniously and - most importantly - completely unexpectedly interfered. He did not allow the Red Army to fight calmly, with feeling, with sense, with alignment. It was because of such a nasty adversary that O-T-S-T-U-P-L-E N-I-E arose. And the pronunciation of this magic word aloud ("retreat") is, in the opinion of my anonymous detractor and a legion of his associates, a spell that at once frees everyone from the oath, from the obligation to follow orders, the charters of instruction. The question (in my opinion, self-evident) about what was the cause and what was the effect is not even discussed. The ill-fated "retreat" is perceived as a kind of natural disaster, as a respectful, "objective" (that is, independent of the action or inaction of people) reason that justifies the loss of an astronomical amount of weapons. However, my critics

didn't come up with this either. They just continued a long tradition. The very first (of the known to me, I do not exclude that there are earlier examples) text of this kind was written on July 6, 1941. This is order No. 2 to the troops of the 11th Army (North-Western Front). The document was signed by all three members of the Military Council of the Army (Commander of the Army, Lieutenant General Morozov, Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Shlemin, PMC Brigadier Commissar Zuev). In accordance with the procedure established in the Red Army for issuing orders, after the date (July 6, 1941) the place where the headquarters of the 11th Army was located was indicated. This place is Idritsa, a village and a railway station in the south of the Pskov region, about 80 km north of the Belarusian Polotsk. Strictly speaking, this already says EVERYTHING. On the 15th day of the war, the headquarters of the 11th Army was at a distance of 450 km in a straight line from the state border. It is impossible to move this distance in 15 days. You can run away, but this is extremely tiring - unless you throw all the heavy objects that interfere with the marathon race (rifles,

grenades, machine guns, mortars, cannons ...). A detailed analysis of the circumstances and chronology of the defeat of the Northwestern Front is beyond the scope of our book. We confine ourselves to a v

conclusions", published in 1992 by a group of military historians of the General Staff of the then Joint Armed Forces of the

CIS: *"... On June 26, the situation of the retreating troops deteriorated sharply ... The 11th Army lost up to 75% of equipment and up to 60% of personnel. Its commander, Lieutenant-General V.I. Morozov, reproached the front commander, Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov for inaction ... the Military Council of the front considered that Morozov could not report in such a rude form, while F.I. Kuznetsov made an erroneous conclusion that the army headquarters, together with V.I. Morozov, was captured and is working under the dictation of the*

enemy ... Discord arose among the command ... " On the same day, June 26, 1941, in the Daugavpils region, the head of the Operational Directorate of the North- Major General Trukhin of the Western Front (later Trukhin actively collaborated with the Germans, headed the headquarters of the Vlasov "army" and ended his life on the gallows on August 1, 1946). (20, p. 164) Reconnaissance aviation was looking for the remnants of the 11th Army and its headquarters. Not German aviation - ours. On June 30, the search met with some success. On this day, from Moscow to the commander of the S-Z.f. a telegram signed by G.K. Zhukov left: *"In the area of \u200b\u200bst. Dvinsk, Koltynyany, forests west of Sventsyan, the 11th Army of the North-Western Front was found, withdrawing from the Kaunas region. The army does not have fuel, shells, food forage. The army does not know the situation and what to do ... "* In other words, the remnants of the army were 150-200 km from the border, but still 100 km west of the Daugava (Western Dvina). To the east, to Polotsk and Idritsa, almost only the headquarters of the 11th Army was able to cross the Daugava. This conclusion can be reached on the basis of a report sent to Moscow on July 4, 1941 by the new chief of staff of the S-Z.f. lieutenant general N. Vatutin (the former chief of staff Klenov was arrested and shot in

October 1941). Vatutin reported to Zhukov a complete list of units and formations of the front that he could find. In the multi-page report even those divisions are indicated, from which only a number, a battle banner and five thousand fighters with a couple of guns remained.

Regarding the 11th Army, the following is said verbatim: *"For the 11th Army (16th F*

divisions, 84th motorized division, 2nd tank division, 5th tank division, 10th anti-tank defense artillery brigade, 429th howitzer artillery regiment, 4th and 30th pontoon regiments) information

No"

All this can be reduced to two short words: "complete defeat." And on July 6, 1941, the commander of this defeated army issues the following order: "I. The

*army troops have completed the large and responsible task of getting out of the encirclement of the enemy and are concentrating behind the line of our troops in new areas. From the first day of the war, the personnel of the army showed selfless devotion to our great Soviet Motherland and the Communist Party. All our formations and units with courage and steadfastness repulsed the treacherous attack of the enemy, inflicting enormous losses on him. Many of our units did not lose their heads and performed their tasks with honor, being surrounded by a superior enemy. Parts of the army in the first battles ensured that the enemy in the following **days followed our withdrawing units with caution and apprehension.*** (It was underlined by me. - M.S.).

II. I ORDER: a)

*Broadly explain to all the commanding, commanding, Red Army staff the situation and the conditions for the army to leave the encirclement. Broadly explain to all fighters and commanders that during **the entire** period of hostilities, under pressure from the enemy, units of the army retreated only during an unexpected attack on June 22 of this year. In none of the subsequent battles, which were fought by parts of the army with superior enemy forces, did the latter succeed. **We retreated due to the created general situation.***

That's it. Not a disorderly retreat at the pace of a forced march (25 km a day), not the loss of military equipment and mass desertion (what else can explain the loss of "60% of the personnel of the retreating troops" on the 5th day of the retreat and the almost complete absence of personnel on 13 th day of this strange "withdrawal"?) created a quite definite "situation" at the front in the Baltic states, and the "general situation" that had arisen by itself was declared the root cause of all troubles. With all this, one can understand the logic of General Morozov - the war was just beginning, and he wanted

cheer up the few fighters remaining in the ranks. Order No. 2 is, in fact, a document of military propaganda, which, by definition, has no right to be true. And from this point of view, even a completely farcical phrase about the enemy, who, with "caution and apprehension", sneaked behind the Red Army fleeing due to the "created situation", becomes appropriate. General

Morozov can be understood. It is much more difficult to understand Marshal G.K. Zhukov when, in a completely peaceful environment, dozens of years after the end of the war, reflecting in his memoirs about the reasons for "temporary failures", he decided to complain about the

enemy: "Neither the People's Commissar of Defense, nor I, nor *my the predecessors of B. M. Shaposhnikov and K. A. Meretskov, nor the leadership of the General Staff did not expect that the enemy would concentrate such a mass of armored and motorized troops and abandon them on the very first day in powerful compact groupings in all strategic directions in order to deliver devastating cutting blows*". (15, p. 282)

Pay attention to how the phrase is constructed. Marshal Zhukov perfectly understands all the absurdity and deceitfulness of these words and therefore immediately writes down marshals Timoshenko, Shaposhnikov, Meretskov, who have long gone to a better world, as co-authors, and in the end - the entire "leading staff of the General Staff" chokh (i.e. Vatutin, Vasilevsky and others). What surprised the Grand Marshal of Victory so much? Didn't you expect that the enemy would create powerful strike groups in strategic directions that are beneficial to him (and not to you)? You did not expect that the enemy would try to deliver "crushing cuts"? What were you waiting for then? A gentle pat on the pope? The fact that the Germans will collect a company of convalescents from each army hospital and send them in a sparse chain straight to the swamps of Polesie? And where did such good expectations come

from? The main axiom of operational art is the concentration of forces. Every graduate of the school of company foremen knows this. Each recruit soldier is convinced of this from his own experience, at the very first exit into the field (into the forest). A tiny mosquito weighing less than one gram crushes a thick skin with a crushing blow

person. Why does he succeed? Because the negligible mosquito force is concentrated on the microscopic area of the tip of the mosquito sting. By the summer of 1941, every military specialist knew that the Wehrmacht command was fully aware of and skillfully put into practice the basic principle of concentration. There was already by that time the experience of the war in Poland, there was a brilliantly conducted operation in the north of France. The last example is particularly striking. At the

level of strategy, the Germans showed their commitment to the idea of concentrating all forces to solve the main problem by the fact that out of the 156 divisions they had, 136 (87%) were allocated for the war with France and its allies. In the vast expanses of Denmark, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany proper, only 13 divisions remained (another 7 divisions fought in Norway). The concentration of all the forces of the Luftwaffe in one single direction was completely brought to the level of gambling in "Russian roulette". From the air defense districts of Königsberg, Breslau, Dresden, Nuremberg, Vienna, all fighters were removed to one. The headquarters of the 3rd fighter squadron and one of its fighter groups (II / JG-3) were left in the air defense zone of Berlin. A total of 49 aircraft, of which, as of May 10, 1940, only 39 were operational (24). At the operational

level, the principle of concentration of forces was implemented with the same unswerving determination. The total length of the western border of the Reich was 650 km (from Basel in the south to the Dutch Arnhem in the north). Only 17 divisions were left on secondary directions with a total length of 300 km, but in the offensive zone (on the border with Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg) already in the first echelon (not counting the reserves of the high command) in the very first days 77 divisions were put into battle, including all tank and all motorized. On the direction of the main attack, on the front 130 km from Liege to Sedan, 7 panzer divisions out of 10 and 5 motorized divisions out of 5 were concentrated. Not only that, on May 15, another tank corps (2 tank divisions) from Belgium was transferred to the breakthrough site. A crushing blow broke through the defenses of the French and British armies. Two weeks later, on May 24, 1940, German tanks reached the English Channel.

All the newspapers of the world (including Pravda and Izvestia) wrote about this then. In mass newspapers (not to mention specialized military publications) maps with arrows were published. Okay, let's assume that the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army had no time to read newspapers. So after all, it's not necessary - to collect information, he and the People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko had other structures, other sources. In particular, until the very beginning of the war, military attachés of two sides were in Moscow: the victorious Germany and the defeated France. There was someone to discuss the course and outcome of the campaign in the West...

But - maybe we're not arguing about that? Maybe Zhukov was unspeakably surprised not by the very fact that the enemy created strike groups to deliver "crushing cutting blows", but by the fact that "*such a mass of armored and motorized troops*" were included in these groups? And we can answer this question quite unequivocally today. Indeed, neither Zhukov, nor Timoshenko, nor Stalin himself expected "such a mass".

In the early 1990s, some documents of Soviet strategic military planning were published, which made it possible to give a very specific answer to the question of what kind of enemy forces, with the participation of what "mass of armored and motorized troops" the top military-political leadership expected to meet in the first *battles* . Soviet Union. The only question to which I do not have an exact answer is how this office of a comrade is. Gareeva allowed the publication of such materials? However, there is no big mystery here. Zhukov's memoirs were published in hundreds of thousands of copies, cited in tens of millions of newspaper and magazine publications, retold to hundreds of millions of cinema and television viewers of the so-called "documentary" films. The documents cited below were published in the "robin" known to an extremely narrow circle of specialists (the two-volume collection "Russia - XX century. Documents. 1941", which received such a name for the color of the cover), which has long become a bibliographic rarity. So Gareev and the Gareevites didn't risk anything in particular ...

Let us return, however, to the essence of the matter. Each of the well-known strategic planning documents began with a section devoted to assessing the possible composition of an enemy force grouping.

(opponents). The plural would be more appropriate here, since the Soviet leadership invariably included Finland, Romania, Hungary, and Italy among the opponents of the USSR in the West, and absolutely fantastic assumptions were made on the issue of the size of the armed forces of the latter. So, according to the March (1941) plan, the Hungarian army grouping on the Soviet border assumed the presence of 20 divisions, while in fact Hungary deployed in the Carpathians, on the border with Soviet Ukraine, only 3 brigades, which corresponds to 1.5 "calculated divisions." Given that the combat value of the divisions of the Wehrmacht and, for example, the Romanian army are simply incomparable, we confine ourselves to comparing the expected and actual strength of the armed forces of the main enemy - Germany. For ease of perception, we summarize the information in the following table.

пд	Тд	мд	танки	самолеты
1. «Соображения об основах стратегического развёртывания Вооружённых Сил СССР». 18 сентября 1940 года				
145	17	8	10 000	13 000
2 «Уточнённый план стратегического развёртывания Вооружённых Сил СССР», 11 марта 1941г				
165	20	15	10 000	10 000
3. «Соображения по плану стратегического развёртывания сил Советского Союза на случай войны с Германией и её союзниками». 15 мая 1941 г.				
141	19	15		
4. Фактический состав групп армий «Север», «Центр», «Юг». 22 июня 1941 г				
84	17	14	3 628	2 500

Note: 84 infantry divisions include 4 light infantry, 2 mountain rifle and 1 cavalry divisions; the 14 motorized divisions included 4 motorized SS divisions; The 900th motorized brigade and the motorized regiment "Grossdeutschland" are counted as one "settlement" md.

An attentive reader must have noticed one oddity: the actual number of Wehrmacht tank divisions is slightly less than expected (17 instead of 19-20), and the tanks turned out to be three times less. This is not a typo. On the one hand, this is the quality of the work of Soviet intelligence, which suggested that in one Wehrmacht tank division there could be up to five thousand tanks, on the other hand, what was called in Soviet historiography "the features of the preparation of the Wehrmacht for an attack on the USSR" As part of this preparation, Hitler

decided to double the number of tank divisions. The "feature" was that this was done in the same way that the collective farms invariably achieved record milk yields - by dilution. The staffing of the Wehrmacht tank division was changed, and instead of two tank regiments, one tank regiment was left in the division (however, in some divisions, the tank regiment included three battalions instead of two, as it was before). In the end, on the morning of June 22, 1941, the number of tanks in one Wehrmacht tank division on the Eastern Front ranged from 265 (7th Panzer Division) to 143 (9th and 11th). Stalin did not play such games. Despite the rapid growth in the number of tank divisions of the Red Army (up to 61 by the beginning of the war), the regular number of tanks in one division decreased very slightly: from 413 according to the staffing table in July 1940 to 375 according to the staff in February 1941 (7, p. 277) The most fantastic were the representations of Soviet intelligence about the combat composition of the Luftwaffe. So,

according to the "Special Report of the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army" dated March 11, 1941, the Germans could field 3,820 fighters, 4,090 twin-engine bombers, and 1,850 Junkers-87 dive bombers on the Eastern Front. The actual number of combat-ready aircraft as of June 22, 1941 was: for fighters - 3.5 times less, for bombers - 4 times less, for dive bombers - 7 times less. The frail German aviation forces were so small - both in comparison with the size of the Red Army Air Force and in comparison with the forecasts of Soviet intelligence - that in the report of the headquarters of the North-Western Front No. 3, signed at 12 noon on June 22, 1941, it was the following is said verbatim: *"The enemy has not yet put into action significant forces of the Air Force, limiting himself to the action of separate groups and single aircraft."* This is about June 22, 1941, this is written. About the very day when enemy aircraft allegedly flew in and destroyed all Soviet aircraft right on the ground in half a day. On "peacefully sleeping airfields" ...

Probably, in order for the discussed phrase from the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov to acquire meaning and reliability, it is necessary to remove all unnecessary words from it and add three necessary ones. Then something quite reasonable will turn out. For example:

“Neither the People’s Commissar of Defense, nor I, nor my predecessors, B. M. Shaposhnikov and K. A. Meretskov, nor the leadership of the General Staff expected that the enemy could inflict crushing dissecting blows with SUCH SMALL FORCES.” And taking into account the real balance of forces of the parties, this would be an absolutely correct definition.

Chapter 2 "OFFENSIVE IS AN EXPRESSION OF SUPERIORITY"

The first publications, which indicated the real size of the Red Army on the eve of the war, provided data on the number and production of tanks and aircraft, took place back in the late 80s of the last century. Nearly twenty years ago. And nothing. Nobody noticed. I printed, for example, the "Military Historical Journal" (official, mind you, the press organ of the USSR Ministry of Defense) back in 1989 (No. 4) a plate that listed the mechanized corps deployed in the western border districts, and the number of tanks in them. Zero emotion. But as soon as a few "amateur historians" drew the attention of the educated public to the fact that, it turns out, there were more mechanized corps in the Red Army than the Germans had tank divisions, they only had to pick up a working calculator and report to readers that, for example, the troops of the South-Western and Southern fronts were armed with 5,826 tanks, and the German Army Group "South" - only 728, it was only necessary for some, especially unbridled "falsifiers of history" to declare out loud that 5,826 is more than 728 ... What then it began ... How much screaming, how many claims ... "This cannot be, because it can never be! Where did you get it from? Submit your documents! No, originals with Stalin's personal signature! Even at school, MarVanna told me about the multiple numerical superiority of the enemy ... "Dear comrades, good gentlemen - why didn't you demand documents from MarVanna with Stalin's signature? Why do you not notice the publication of documents and facts, but react so violently to the most obvious conclusions drawn on the basis of these facts?

As for the truly primary question of the reliability of the figures given here and below, two points should be noted in this regard. First. There are no original documents with Stalin's handwritten signature in my personal archive. Documents with which I worked in state and military

archives (for example, the so-called "Special folders" of the minutes of the Politburo meetings, stored in the RGASPI, or the minutes of the meetings of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, recently declassified in the GARF), are (for the most part) typewritten copies. Theoretically speaking, over the past 60 years they could have been faked. In the same way, the documents published in the "robin" (4.6), and 42 volumes of the "Collections of Combat Documents" (SBD), and the facts cited in the monographs constantly cited by me, published by teams of military historians of the General Staff (2, 3). But in any case, these documents were at the disposal of those people and structures who were in no way interested in exaggerating the composition and weapons of the Red Army defeated in the summer of 1941. Therefore, I believe that the figures below can be safely used as a minimum (most likely underestimated) quantification limit.

The second point is related to the fact that the exact figures characterizing the strength and armament of the Red Army (as well as the army of any other powerful power of that time) cannot be given in principle. The reason for this is very simple - on the eve of the war of the USSR. Germany, France, England continuously increased their military power. More and more new units and formations were formed, the tank and aircraft fleet was rapidly updated, technically obsolete vehicles were decommissioned or withdrawn to rear units, staffing tables and the structure of formations were changing, the methods of transferring the army from a state of peace to a state of war were changing. It is impossible to indicate exact figures down to the last comma in such a situation, but - as it will become clear from what follows - this does not create big problems for the researcher, since with the numerical superiority that the Red Army possessed, small "measurement errors" no longer have a fundamental

values.

The First World War ended with the Treaty of Versailles, according to which Germany not only lost some territories inhabited by Germans (i.e., lost part of the draft contingents), but, more importantly, was deprived

the right to create and maintain combat aviation, tank troops, artillery of medium and large caliber. In general, the size of the land army (Reichswehr) allowed for Germany was limited to the number of 10 divisions. The Entente countries did not even hide the fact that their goal is to weaken the military potential of Germany to such a level that Germany will never be able to return to the "club" of the great European powers. On the other hand, Soviet Russia — despite the fact that it betrayed its allies in Brest, despite the fact that the new Russian government confiscated the property of British, French and American citizens and companies without trial — no restrictions were imposed. The country of the "victorious proletariat" has by no means become (like Libya or North Korea in the modern world) a pariah country. Nothing like this. The victorious "proletarians" (from among the former shopkeepers, lumpen intellectuals, or even just dark crooks like Ganetsky) traveled around the leading capitals of the world, bought weapons and military technology, almost openly recruited "agents of influence", lured military and technical specialists with fabulous money. The brilliant prophecy of Ulyanov-Lenin that in the corrupt bourgeois West there will be (and in considerable numbers) "idiots useful to us" has come true by 101 percent. Thus, in complete disregard for the age-old lamentations of

communist propaganda (*"History has given us little time"*), the notorious "history" (i.e., "useful idiots" in London, Paris and Washington) gave the Soviet Union much more time than Germany. to prepare for the Great War. Time is a very important resource. In some cases, it is decisive. As the famous aphorism says: "Even nine women cannot give birth to a

child in one month." The training of military specialists (tankers, gunners, pilots, navigators) requires even more time than a normal pregnancy. And in order to accumulate a multimillion-dollar stock of trained reservists, it takes many years. Germany did not have these years, but the USSR did. However, the task of creating a highly effective army in the middle of the 20th century was no longer solved by time alone and by huge human and natural resources.

We also needed modern industry, engineering and scientific personnel. With this type of resources in the country there was a "greater tension" - the Bolsheviks had the imprudence to destroy or force most of the scientists and engineers to flee the country. Over the seas, across the oceans, their Sikorsky, Seversky and Kartveli fighters, British and American aircraft were refueled with high-octane aviation gasoline, manufactured according to the technology of engineer Ipatiev ... Stalin had talented youth at his disposal (but she still had to study, study and study) and millions of prisoners who could extract an unimaginable amount of ore, which could fill up huge channels dug by other prisoners. Yes, it was still possible to sell this ore abroad and receive beautiful pieces of paper with portraits of wise presidents or even gold in exchange. But gold is an eminently useless metal. You can't even make a good nail out of it. And it's ridiculous to talk about the golden bayonet (heavy and soft).

The solution to the problem was found again in the West. In the context of the most severe economic crisis (late 20s - early 30s), the big bourgeoisie of the industrialized countries of the world, in a race, pushing each other away from the "Soviet feeder", rushed to sell Stalin military equipment, technology, machine tools, laboratories, test benches, entire factories are complete. The reckless, immoral and suicidal policy of the West allowed Stalin to turn gigantic financial resources (both forcibly seized from the previous owners and newly created by the labor of a multimillion-strong army of collective farm and Gulag slaves) into mountains of weapons and military equipment. At giant enterprises equipped with the latest American and German equipment, the English Vickers-E tank multiplied thousands of copies under the name T-26, the design of the American engineer Christie turned into thousands of Soviet BT tanks. Under German licenses, the production of 37-mm and 76-mm anti-aircraft guns, the famous "forty-five" (45 mm anti-tank gun), was launched. French aircraft engines under the modest proletarian names M87 / M88 lifted into the air long-range DB-3 bombers equipped with American Sperry autopilots, while French engines renamed

M100 / M103, stood on Soviet SB bombers, the best Polikarpov I-15 and I-16 fighters in the world roared with M25 / M62 engines (nee the American Wright-Cyclone), at an aircraft factory in Fili near Moscow (concession of the Junkers company) the world's first heavy four-engine bomb carrier TB-3 with M-17 (BMW-6) engines was built ...

Dear

reader, if it's not difficult for you, try not to read in my book what is not in it. I am not saying that it is easy to organize the mass production of technically complex types of weapons, even if based on imported equipment, imported technologies, with the help of foreign specialists under foreign licenses.

It is easy to do nothing and squander the legacy of grandchildren and great-grandchildren, pumping crude oil through a pipe built by fathers and grandfathers. But there is no "unparalleled miracle" in the history of Soviet industrialization in the 1930s. The same "miracles" in our memory have occurred (and are happening now) in South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand. The only difference is that long before the Bolsheviks came to power, the so-called "bast-bast Russia" was already producing its own rails and its own steam locomotives, cars and planes, heavy cruisers and almost weightless radio tubes. Simply put, Russia in 1916 was neither Malaysia nor Singapore...

Stalin and his "nominees" knew how to make people work. One can argue about how rationally these great works were organized from the point of view of the "price-result" criterion. It may very well be that with a normal competitive market organization of business, without excitement, "storming" and repressions, the colossal investments of the 30s could have yielded an even greater return. In any case, the "price" did not bother Stalin much (the convicts in the Kolyma mines washed gold in three shifts without days off), and the result was enormous. The Soviet "students" undoubtedly surpassed their Western "teachers". Here are just two typical pieces of evidence. In 1936, Louis Charles Breguet, the founder of the largest French aircraft manufacturing company (to this day producing jet Mirages together with the Dasso company), was able to visit the aviation factories of the USSR. Returning home, he wrote: *"Using the labor of ten times more workers than France, the Soviet aviation industry produces 20 times more aircraft."* In this phrase,

of course, more emotions than statistics. But it is interesting that the young Soviet aircraft designer A. Yakovlev had the same emotions after visiting French aviation enterprises in the same 1936: *"Watching the aircraft factories of France, I involuntarily compared them with ours. And each time, with deep satisfaction, I came to the conclusion that in terms of scale, in terms of the quality of equipment, not one of the French enterprises I saw could be compared with any of our ordinary aircraft factories."*

Now let's move on from emotions to dry numbers. Already in 1937, the Soviet Air Force was armed with 8,139 combat aircraft - about the same number will be two years later in service with Germany (4,093), England (1,992) and the USA (2,473), combined. (1) By October 1, 1939, the aircraft fleet of the Soviet Air Force had grown one and a half times (up to 12,677 aircraft) and now already **exceeded the total number of aviation of all participants in the outbreak of the world war**. In 1940, Germany at war produced 1,877 single-engine fighters and 3,012 bombers, the USSR produced 4,179 and 3,301, respectively. Even in 1941, in the face of the loss or evacuation of a number of leading factories, the Soviet Union overtook Germany by 2.5 times in the number of fighters produced (7,080 versus 2,852), lagging behind, however, in the number of twin-engine bombers produced (2,861 versus 3,783). In the future, the quantitative indicators of the production of combat aircraft in the Soviet Union were all the time higher. With one exception - in 1944, in an attempt to withstand the massive strikes of the Allied strategic bomber aircraft, Germany produced 23,805 single-engine fighters (8 times more than in 1941), and in the USSR that year "only" 16,703 were produced. fighter. (24, 32). But this breakthrough in the production of fighters was already the last effort of the German aircraft industry ... The scale of Soviet tank production was just as grandiose.

Already at the beginning of 1939, in terms of the number of tanks (14,540 - and this is not counting the obsolete T-27 and light amphibious T-37/38), the Red Army was exactly twice as large as the armies of Germany (3,420), France (3,290) and England (550), combined. By June 22, 1941, the tank fleet of the Soviet armed forces was expressed by an unthinkable figure for any other country in the world - **21,447** tanks (this, again, not counting

2.6 thousand obsolete tankettes T-27 and not counting 3.8 thousand light floating T-37 / T-38 / T-40). (82) In June 41, the Wehrmacht was armed with only **5,440 tanks and self-propelled guns of all types** (not counting 1,122 Pz-I tankettes). **Four times less** than in the Red Army. The volume of tank production in the USSR, even in the catastrophic year 1941, amounted to 6,590 units (including 1,360 heavy KB and 3,010 medium T-34s). The Germans (on whom the whole of Europe supposedly "worked") in 1941 produced one and a half times fewer tanks and self-propelled guns (4,110 units, including 700 Czech Pz-38 (t)). In the next year, 1942, the tank industry of the USSR already produced 24,720 tanks (including 2,550 KB and 12,530 T-34s), which was 4 times higher than the production of tanks and self-propelled guns in Germany (6,090 units, including 1 560 tankettes and light

tanks). (1, 2, 11) The huge capacities of the military industry, inexhaustible reserves of natural raw materials, a multi-million reserve of reserve military personnel who have served on active duty allowed Stalin to create the largest army in the world. By the summer of 1939, the Red Army already had 100 rifle divisions (counting 5 rifle brigades as two "calculated divisions"), 18 cavalry divisions, and 36 tank brigades. The land army of the aggressor country (Germany) by this time consisted of only 51 divisions (including 5 tank and 4 motorized). According to the latest approved version of the MP-41 mobilization plan, it was planned to deploy the Red Army in the composition of: **198 rifle** (including 19 mountain rifle), **61 tank, 31 motorized, 13 cavalry divisions. A total of 303 divisions.** As well as **94 corps artillery regiments and 72 RGK artillery regiments, 10 PTABRs** (RGK anti-tank artillery brigade), **16 airborne brigades.** According to the accepted tradition, we did not include in the general list of units and formations of the NKVD troops, the number of which (154 thousand people) corresponded to 10 "calculated divisions". Moreover, all these connections by June 22, 1941 already existed in reality. The frames of 303 divisions were created, 5.6 million people were put under arms as part of the "peacetime army". Moreover, in the armies of the western border districts, the "frames" were basically already "filled". In 99 rifle divisions of the western districts (including the Leningrad Military District), the number

personnel (with a staff of 14.5 thousand people) was brought to: **21 divisions - 14 thousand, 72 divisions - 12 thousand, and 6 divisions - 11**

thousand people. (3, p. 83) In the course of open mobilization, it was mainly assumed that the previously formed units and formations would be understaffed to full-time standards and the creation of a very small ("small" in comparison with the gigantic strength of the Red Army in peacetime) the number of new divisions: during the first three months it was planned to form an additional 30 new rifle divisions. (3, pp. 73, 4, pp. 607–651) In this way, the procedure for mobilization deployment adopted in the USSR was fundamentally different from what was in other European countries. For example, France in the summer of 1939 had only 33 personnel divisions, with a total number of metropolitan ground forces of about 550 thousand people. During the mobilization deployment, more than 50 new, completely "raw" divisions were formed, most of the personnel of which had not previously served in the army at all. In the spring of 1939, the Wehrmacht had only 35 regular infantry divisions, during open mobilization the number of infantry divisions by the beginning of the next year, 1940, increased to 86. These "newborn" divisions had to crush the equally young, poorly trained and poorly armed French army ... In April 1941, the rifle divisions

of the Red Army were transferred to a new state. The number of personnel slightly (by 16%) decreased and now amounted to **14.5 thousand** people against **16.9 thousand** in the infantry division of the "first wave of formation" of the Wehrmacht. The somewhat larger size of the German infantry division meant only a greater development of rear and support services - in terms of firepower, the Red Army rifle division was in no way inferior to the enemy division. According to the staffing table of April 1941, the rifle division was supposed to have 166 heavy and 392 light machine guns (in the infantry division of the Wehrmacht, respectively, 138 and 378). A lot has already been written about the fact that in the infantry division of the Wehrmacht for 6 thousand people there were only 767 machine guns in the state, and the rest were armed with ordinary rifles (in the amount of 11.5 thousand), a lot has already been written (although the directors and producers of the so-called "historical » films it has not worked yet). Moreover, the ri

The army, which was armed with 10,420 rifles and carbines, was re-equipped from the "three-line" to the Tokarev self-loading rifle (SVT), which gave a noticeable advantage over the enemy in the density of small arms fire. In order to never again return to the discussion of completely delusional fabrications that the Red Army **before the start of the war** (underline these three words with three bold lines, dear reader) did not even have enough rifles, we note that actually available by June 1941 small arms could be equipped with the following number of divisions: (2, cf. 351)

- easel machine guns - 460; -
- light machine guns - 435; -
- rifles and carbines - 743.

Traditionally, Soviet artillery was powerful - that merciless "god of war" of the 20th century. A Red Army rifle division (along with three rifle regiments) included two artillery regiments. In addition, there were 6 light "regimental" guns of 76.2 mm caliber in each of the three rifle regiments. Total: **18 regimental** short-barreled 76.2-mm guns, **16 "divisional" (having** more weight, longer barrel length and, accordingly, higher muzzle velocity) 76.2-mm guns, **32 122 mm howitzers, 12 152 mm howitzers.** For comparison, let's give the number of artillery systems and the so-called "weight of the total volley" of the field artillery of the Polish, French and German infantry divisions (the weight of shells in systems of comparable caliber of different armies varied somewhat, therefore the value of the weight of the total volley given below should be considered only as indicative).

	75/ 76,2-мм	100/105-мм	122-мм	150/ 152.2-мм	Вес залпа, кг
СССР	34	-	32	12	1395
Германия	20	36	-	18	1384
Франция	36	-	-	24	1183
Польша	30	15	-	3	531

As you can see, in terms of the number of barrels and the weight of the total volley, the artillery of the Soviet rifle division was at least not inferior to the "best world standards." Contrary to popular misconception, mortar weapons were not forgotten in the Soviet Union either. According to the staffing table of the rifle division, 84 company mortars of 50 mm caliber and 54 mortars of 82 mm caliber were supposed (in the infantry division of the Wehrmacht, respectively, 93 and 54). A small (by 9 units) lag in the number of light company mortars was more than covered by the fact that the Red Army rifle division was also armed with 12 powerful 120-mm mortars. In terms of the weight of the projectile (mine) and damaging effect, this system was already quite comparable with the German 105-

mm howitzer. All of the above is the staffing table of April 1941. But, perhaps, "history gave Stalin little time" and all these mortar guns simply did not exist in nature? For complete clarity, it is worth calculating for yourself. We take the statistical collection "Artillery Supply in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45", released by the Main Artillery Directorate in 1977 (and now already declassified), we take a working calculator and divide the numbers of guns, mortars and howitzers indicated in the collection by the regular number of small arms weapons divisions. As a result, we get a certain conditional number of divisions that could be equipped with the available artillery weapons. Yes, of course, this is not how a mobilization plan is drawn up, but the proposed approach is quite appropriate for assessing the "general situation". So: (9, pp. 248, 250, 252)

	Наличие, тыс.ед.	Кол-во дивизий
50-мм миномёты	36324	432
82-мм миномёты	14124	269
120-мм миномёты	3872	323
76-мм полковые пушки	4701	261
76-мм дивизионные пушки	8513	532
122-мм гаубицы	8124	254
152-мм гаубицы	3817	318

As can be seen from the above table, the deployment of the largest army in the world was fully provided with the available stocks of the main types of artillery weapons. The Red Army was provided with divisional "three-inch" guns even with such an abundance that they were sometimes put into service with artillery batteries of rifle regiments, where light short-barreled 76-mm guns were supposed to be standard. For the most attentive reader, we will explain that the staffing of mountain rifle, tank, motorized and cavalry divisions provided for a significantly smaller number of artillery systems than in rifle divisions. In particular, the 122-mm howitzers of the mountain rifle division required 24 (instead of 32 in the rifle division), tank - 12, motorized - 16, cavalry - 8. No less significant is the comparison of the number of artillery

barrels of the Red Army as of the beginning of June 1941 with weapons adversary: (9, pp. 248, 250, 263)

	СССР	Германия
82-мм (81-мм) миномёты	14 524	11 767
76-мм (75- мм) пушки всех типов	15 298	4 176
105-мм гаубицы		7 076
122-мм гаубицы	8 124	
107-мм (105-мм) пушки	862	760
122-мм пушки	1 255	
152-мм (150-мм) гаубицы и пушки	6 458	3 802
203-мм (210-мм) гаубицы	871	403

Having dealt with quantity, let's say a few words about quality. Of the total number of 56.7 thousand guns (including 23.5 thousand anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns) that were in service with the Red Army in early June 1941, 52.4 thousand guns (92%) entered the troops during the period from the 37th to the 41st year. (3) For cannons and howitzers, the service life of which is calculated in tens of years, this can be defined by the words "almost new." As for the tactical and technical novelty, the latest systems of the 1936-1939s already constituted a significant part of the total artillery fleet. So, for example, in the troops of the Kyiv Special Military District, out of a total of 2,203 76.2 mm cannons, new systems accounted for half (1,069 units). For 122-mm howitzers and guns - 27%, for 152-mm systems - 73%. For the neighboring (and much weaker) Odessa Military District, the corresponding figures are 35%, 13% and 65%. (33, p. 79) Practically new (both in terms of the time of development and the date of issue) were all mortar weapons, most of the anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns. And the Soviet military-political leadership was not going to stop there. Thus, the plan for the production of small arms and artillery weapons approved on February 7, 1941 for 1941 provided for the production of 4 thousand anti-aircraft guns of 85 mm caliber, 2,600 artillery systems of 122 mm caliber, 2,500 artillery systems of 152 mm caliber, 2,060 mortars of 120 mm caliber, 1.8 million rifles ... (8) If the Red Army was not inferior to any army in

the world in terms of the quantity and quality of artillery weapons, then the level of mechanization of Soviet artillery was completely unique. According to the staffing table of April 1941, howitzer artillery

the regiment of an ordinary rifle (not motorized!) Division **for 36 howitzers was supposed to have 72 tractors** (caterpillar tractors), 90 trucks, 9 special and 3 cars. Two tractors for one howitzer is a double reservation of mechanized traction, and not at all evidence of the exorbitant weight of artillery systems. A 122 mm howitzer weighed about 2.5 tons, a 152 mm howitzer weighed 4.2 tons. For towing divisional howitzers, conventional tractors manufactured by the Stalingrad and Chelyabinsk plants (STZ-3, S-60, S-65, nee Caterpillar) were intended. This is exactly the vehicle that, in any rain and snow, could move along Russian roads-directions. The high speed of towing guns in a rifle (i.e. infantry) division is not at all necessary - it is enough that the artillery simply does not lag behind the soldiers walking on foot. In any case, our enemy did not even dream of 72 tracked tractors in an artillery regiment. In the only artillery regiment of the Wehrmacht infantry division, all artillery systems (including 150-mm howitzers) were dragged by six horses. According to the state, there were even fewer trucks in the artillery regiment of the German infantry division than in the howitzer regiment of the Soviet rifle division (80 versus 90). In general, the entire infantry division of the Wehrmacht relied on 615 trucks, which was still more than the state of the Soviet rifle division (529 trucks and special ones). The only thing in which the German division was decisively superior to the rifle division of the Red Army was in the number of cars (394 versus 19). (11) Most of the command staff of the Soviet rifle division had to walk or ride (for this, 616 saddle horses were provided in the state of the division). No doubt, the German officer moved in space with incomparably greater comfort. As long as this space was the cobbled pavement of good old Europe. In those directions that were called "roads" in Russia, the mare had a much greater cross-country ability ...

The rifle division of the Red Army was not inferior to the infantry division of the Wehrmacht in such an important indicator for the armies of the middle of the 20th century as **anti-tank defense**. As part of the infantry division of the Wehrmacht was an anti-tank

division, which was armed with 36 anti-tank 37-mm guns. In addition, each of the three infantry regiments of the division had a PTO company with 12 anti-tank 37-mm guns. Taking into account three more such guns in the reconnaissance battalion of the division, the total number of anti-tank guns is 75 units. A similar scheme for the distribution of anti-tank weapons was adopted in the rifle division of the Red Army: a separate anti-tank division, which was armed with 18 anti-tank 45-mm guns, and another 12 "forty-five" in each of the three rifle regiments. A total of 54 anti-tank guns. In addition - and this was a significant difference in the structure of the artillery weapons of the Soviet rifle division - the division commander could also use 16 long-barreled 76.2-mm guns from the artillery regiment to fight tanks. The newest (designed in 1936-1939) divisional 76.2-mm cannons - designed by Grabin F-22 - and USV, with an acceptable weight for an anti-tank gun (1,620 - 1,480 kg), were significantly superior to the German 37-mm in terms of armor penetration anti-tank guns Pak-36/37 and were not inferior to the best German 50-mm anti-tank gun Pak-38 for the summer of 1941. At a distance of up to 1,000 m, the F-22 pierced the frontal (i.e., the most durable) armor of any German tank. By the beginning of the war, the Red Army received 4,038 F-22 and USV divisions, which was almost four times the number of those German tanks (439 Pz-IV and 707 Pz-III series H and J), for which it was worth spending 76-mm shell. It is noteworthy that it was the F-22 guns that turned out to be the type of captured weapons that the Wehrmacht hastened to adopt. Five thousand F-22s captured in the summer of 1941, after minor modifications (the Germans bored the charging chamber to fit the long cartridge case of their armor-piercing shot), were installed on the chassis of a Czech-made Pz-38 (t) light tank. The result was an improvised self-propelled gun, which in 1942 (along with the new 50-mm Pak-38 anti-tank gun) became the main means of combating the Soviet

tanks.

A powerful anti-tank gun is an important, iconic, but by no means the only component of an anti-tank defense system. No less important is the high-speed and all-terrain "means of delivery" of the gun to the firing position. The problem is that the distance of 1.5–2 km from the border

deploying to the line of enemy trenches, the tank slowly creeps in 5 minutes. Accordingly, the anti-tank division, which arrived at the breakthrough site half an hour late, did not complete the combat mission and will no longer be able to complete it - the enemy tanks disappeared behind clouds of smoke and dust. The issue of "speed" in the Wehrmacht was resolved perfectly. A Krupp Kfz 69 three-axle truck was used to transport the 37-mm guns of the anti-tank division. On the highway, this car, light enough (2,450 kg) for a 110-horsepower engine, rushed at a speed of 70 km / h. True, without weapons. The undercarriage of the 37 mm gun did not allow transportation at speeds of more than 30-35 km / h, so the high speed of the Kfz 69 could not be used in practice. As for "all-terrain vehicle", a truck with two leading rear axles could be considered an "all-terrain vehicle" on the highways of Belgium and France, but not on Russian off-road. The Soviet Union took a

different path. The command of the Red Army initially decided that the means of transporting anti-tank guns should have a maneuverability no less than a tank. Simply put, you need a full-fledged caterpillar tractor. Such a vehicle, the Komsomolets armored small-sized tracked tractor, was created by a team of designers led by N. Astrov on the basis of components and assemblies of the T-37 light amphibious tank at the end of 1936. The tractor's armor protected the driver from rifle-caliber bullets and shell fragments. The vehicle could tow guns weighing up to 2 tons (i.e., all existing and promising anti-tank and divisional guns), overcame a ditch 1.4 m wide, a ford 0.6 m, a wall 47 cm high, broke young Christmas trees with a diameter of up to 18 cm, climbed uphill without a trailer with a slope of up to 45 degrees, turned around on a platform with a diameter of 5 meters. In general, with a specific pressure of the tracks on the ground of 0.58 kg / cm. sq. (0.9–1.0 for medium German tanks), Komsomolets outperformed all its opponents in terms of maneuverability. Speed? Much lower than a Krupp truck: 47 km / h on the highway without cargo and trailer, 8 - 11 km / h with a full load on rough terrain. This is probably an example of what is called "reasonable sufficiency". Complaints about the "exceptionally low reliability" of Soviet armored vehicles have become just common

place in the writings of modern Russian historians (and every year this "lament of Yaroslavna" is getting stronger). The public is strongly persuaded to believe that all our tanks / tractors / armored vehicles crumbled in the very first days of the war, and because of this ... Let's not believe the hysterics - "Komsomolets", of course, fell apart, but not immediately. In the Finnish army, the captured "Komsomol" worked regularly until 1961 (sixty-first). Without new factory parts and replacement motors. From the 37th to the 41st year inclusive, 7,780 units of such miracle machines were produced (the world-famous Krupp company produced 7,000 Kfz 69 trucks over the same period), by the beginning of the war, there were 6,700 units in the Red Army tractors of this type. (17) Is

it a lot - 6,700 armored tractors for anti-tank guns? Everything is relative. There were half as many tanks in 17 Wehrmacht tank divisions on the Eastern Front (3,266). There were twice as many anti-tank guns in the entire Red Army (14.9 thousand). According to the staffing table in April 1941, the anti-tank division of the rifle division was supposed to have 21 Komsomolets. Thus, the number of tractors available to the troops **could be equipped with 319 rifle and motorized divisions** (in reality, as noted above, 229 such divisions were deployed). It is also worth noting the fact that, along with armored tractors, "created on the basis of the chassis of a floating tank", these T-37 / T-38 / T-40 amphibious tanks themselves were in the rifle divisions of the Red Army. The reconnaissance battalion of the rifle and motorized divisions was armed with such combat vehicles - a luxury not available to any other army in the world. According to the staff of the division, 16 amphibious tanks were supposed, in fact, as of June 1, 1941, there were 3,447 T-37 / T-38 / T-40 tanks in the military districts. (1, p. 597) An average of 15 tanks per division. Average. In the direction of the main attack, in the Kiev and Odessa districts, rifle divisions were found, in which there were 20–27 amphibious tanks (30th, 51st, 58th, 97th, 99th, 130th, 140 -i, 156th, 169th). (76) These tanks sailed, of course, badly - worse than a lane boat - but they could easily cross a forest river without a ford and a bridge or tow a light anti-tank gun to a firing position.

The highest possible mobility was possessed by the airborne troops of the Red Army (five airborne corps of three brigades each and one separate airborne brigade). We note right away that **NOT A SINGLE** German airborne formation was on the Eastern Front in 1941. **ALL** the countless references to "enemy parachute landings", found not only on the pages of memoirs, but also in combat reports in the summer of 1941, are fiction. As for the Soviet Airborne Forces, they were called "corps" with great exaggeration. The number of personnel of the VDK was only 8,020 people, that is, this corps was much smaller than a rifle division. Communist historians tried not to remember about the deployment of airborne troops in the "invariably peaceful" Soviet Union, the number of which exceeded the number of horsemen in the army of Batu Khan. In recent years, with the light hand of V. Suvorov, it has become traditional to complain that superbly trained and courageous saboteurs with one landing knife in their hands were "thrown under German tanks ..." And although there is some truth in this statement, a detailed acquaintance with the staff The schedule of the Soviet Airborne Forces forces one to doubt that in an ordinary combined arms battle the corps was so defenseless. In addition to parachutes and knives, the VDK was supposed to have: 4,500 self-loading rifles, 1,257 machine guns, 440 light machine guns (more than in a rifle division), 60 mortars, 864 knapsack flamethrowers (!), 18 regimental 76.2-mm cannons , 50 T-38/T-40 amphibious tanks, 241 vehicles. In fact, under the name "airborne corps", highly mobile, well-armed rifle brigades were created, with the possibility of parachute or landing landing of part of the personnel and weapons behind enemy lines.

Another myth firmly driven into the mass consciousness is COMMUNICATION, more precisely, its absence, which lack of communication was the cause of all the troubles. Why did this particular myth turn out to be perhaps the most enduring of all the creations of Soviet propagandist historians? Probably because it is almost true.

There really was no connection. In the first hours, days and weeks of the war, any exchange of information between headquarters and units at all levels was almost completely paralyzed. The higher command, as a rule, had no information about the situation, actions, losses of their subordinates. Parts and formations of their own army were searched with the help of reconnaissance aircraft - unbelievable, but true. The enemy "suddenly" was discovered dozens (and in the first days of the war, hundreds) of kilometers from the front line, which, judging by belated reports, was allegedly still held by our troops (it was these events that gave rise to countless rumors about "German airborne landings"). All this is the absolute truth. Further, the Soviet "historians" with dexterity, which seasoned card cheats would envy, distorted this truth, replacing **the fact of the lack of communication** between command authorities **with a deliberately false thesis about the "lack of technical means of communication."** Which is not at all the same thing. To establish a connection,

you need: - the subject with whom you

want to get in touch; - the desire of

the subject to enter into communication; - and only if the first two conditions are present, then there is a need for technical means of communication (for example, drums, tom-toms, hunting horns, signal rockets, etc.).

Let us explain this simple theory with a simple everyday example. If you do not have a child, then you will not be able to get through to him. If the child already exists, but he went to a friend's birthday party and does not want to return home on time, then even two cell phones (plus a home phone in a friend's apartment) will not help you. The phone will be "busy" all the time, the battery will "run out" in the cell phone, the "wrong key" will be pressed ... Napoleon, Suvorov and Kutuzov commanded huge armies with numerous artillery without a single phone at all. During the First World War, communications in multimillion-strong armies, already armed with tanks and airplanes, were successfully built on the use of wire telephones, while radio stations were a rare exotic. Finally, an excellent "technical means of communication" was and remains a messenger on a riding horse, motorcycle, car, boat, tank, light aircraft, helicopter ...

"... June 22 at 6 o'clock. 50 min. I crossed the Bug in an assault boat ... following the tracks of the tanks of the 18th Panzer Division, I drove

to the bridge over the Lesna River ... throughout the first half of the day on June 22, I accompanied the 18th TD ... June 23 at 4 o'clock. 10 min. I left my command post and went to the 12th Army Corps, from this corps I went to the 47th Tank Corps, to the village of Bildeyki, 23 km east of Brest-Litovsk. Then I went to the 17th Panzer Division, where I arrived at 8 o'clock ... Then I went to Pruzhany, where the command post of the tank group was transferred ... June 24 at 8 o'clock. 25 min. I left my command post and drove towards Slonim. On the way, I came across Russian infantry holding the highway under fire ... I was forced to intervene and, with machine gun fire from the commander's tank, forced the enemy to leave their positions ... at 11 o'clock. 30 min. I arrived at the command post of the 17th Panzer Division, located on the western outskirts of Slonim, where, in addition to the division commander, I met the commander of the 47th Corps .. " (16)

So, very intelligibly, G. Guderian explains why the Red Army on its own territory turned out to be “without communication”, and the German army on our territory - with communication. It's just that the commander of the 17th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht did not have to call anywhere. His immediate superior, the commander of the 47th Panzer Corps, together with him personally directs the battle at the same command post, and the most important chief among them, the commander of the tank group, General Guderian, breaks into each of his divisions several times a day, under enemy fire. .

And vice versa - even the complete equipping of the headquarters of the Red Army with satellite communication terminals would not change anything in a situation where the commanders have already fled or when they (commanders) do not want to communicate with higher commanders simply because they cannot report anything good to them. And not on June 22, 1941, this attack “suddenly” fell upon the Red Army. *“Having left for the scene, comrade Blucher avoided direct communication with Moscow in every possible way ... for three days, in the presence of a normally working telegraph connection, it was impossible to get a conversation with comrade Blucher.”* This is an excerpt from the order of the People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov No. 0040 dated September 4, 1938, and this order was dedicated to a local armed conflict near Lake Khasan. With the outbreak of the Great War, the situa

no walkie-talkies on the armored train could already establish communication in the army, in which commanders and headquarters disappeared by the hundreds and thousands.

And there were wires. In huge quantities. So. in the Western OVO alone (according to a memorandum from the chief of staff of the district, Major General Klimovskikh, dated June 19, 1941), the district communications service had 117,000 insulators, 78,000 hooks and 261 tons of wires at its disposal. (66, p. 44) In total, as of January 1, 1941, the Red Army had 343,241 km of telephone and 28,147 km of telegraph cable. This amount could wrap the Earth around the equator 9 times. There were 252,376 telephone sets of all types. On average - **more than 800 vehicles per division**. There were, of course, much fewer telegraph sets - "only" 11,049 pieces, including 247 "BODO" devices for encrypted communication. (4, p. 623). But, according to the general opinion of Soviet historians, all this is completely "not right". The Red Army could not fight without a walkie-talkie. And everyone knows why - German saboteurs cut all the wires in the very first hours of the war. And that's why... There really were saboteurs. Each of the four tank groups of the Wehrmacht was given one company of saboteurs from the Brandenburg Special Purpose Regiment. The company consisted of 2 officers, 220 non-commissioned officers and privates, including 20-30 people with knowledge of the Russian language. (46, p. 55) This innumerable horde of enemies had only a few hours at its disposal (for reasons of secrecy, the Germans began to cut the wires just before dawn on June 22, 1941). Soviet partisans in Belarus before the start of Operation Bagration (June 1944) were, as is commonly believed, more than 200 thousand. The time for cutting wires was practically unlimited - the war was already in its third year, so there was no need to hide hostile actions and intentions. Was it then possible, in June 1944, to cut "all the wires" on the same terrain and leave the German army without communication? There were also radios in the Red Army (therefore, it was impossible in principle to leave this army "without communication" with the help of scissors alone). As an illustration of the question of the actual equipment of the Red Army with radio communications, we will cite data from the MP-41 mobilization plan (in the future we will return to this important document many times in the future),

signed by Timoshenko and Zhukov on February 12, 1941. As of January 1, 1941, the Armed Forces of the USSR had: (6, pp. 622–623)

-

front-line radio stations (PAT) - 40 pieces (an average of 8 for **each future fronts**); - army and corps

(RAF, RSB) - 1,613 pieces (an average of **18 for each rifle and mechanized corps**); - regimental (5AK)

- 5909 pieces (an average of **4 for each regiment**) Total - **7,566 radio**

stations of all types. Of course, this number did not include tank and aircraft radio stations. And this is on January 1, 1941. The factories continued their "peaceful creative work", and by June 22 there should have been even more radio communications. So, the plan of the 41st provided for the release of 33 PAT, 940 RSB and RAF, 1,000 5AK. For some reason, the note on the MP-41 mobilization plan does not contain data on the presence of the predecessor of the RAF - a powerful (500 W) radio station 11-AK, although there were a lot of these complexes in the troops. So, in the Kiev OVO (58 divisions), as of May 10, 1941, there were 5 RAT complexes, 6 RAF, 97 RSB, 126 stations 11-AK and 1,012 regimental 5AK. (6, p. 191) Even without counting the regimental 5AK, it turns out an average of **4 powerful radio stations per division.**

Now it's worth explaining what all these capital letters mean. The smallest of the radio stations mentioned (5AK) had a range of 25 km for telephone communications and 50 km for telegraph communications. That is, although it was considered a "regimental radio station" in the Red Army, its real range was several times greater than the authorized width of the division's defense front! 5AK had the dimensions of a large chest and could be transported both in the back of a car and in horse-drawn gigs. The RSB radio station was standardly installed on the chassis of a car, had a radiated power of up to 50 W and provided a telephone communication range of 300 km, that is, in fact, in the army or even the front line of action. RAF is a much more powerful (400–500 W) set of equipment installed on two ZIS-5 trucks. The PAT complex could be considered a true miracle of technology of the 40s. The huge power (1.2 kW) made it possible to provide telephone communication at a distance of 600 km, and telegraph - up to 2,000 km. The transmitter circuit provided

the ability to work on 381 fixed communication channels with automatic frequency control. Three ZIS-5 vehicles were used to transport all the RAT equipment, along with an autonomous power supply system, the calculation of the station was 17 people. It is noteworthy that according to the MP-41 mobilization plan, the Red Army was supposed to have 117 (!!!) RAT front-line complexes. In fact, the Red Army reached Berlin, never having more than fifty PATs in service at the same time ...

Except of the above powerful car radio installations, the Red Army was armed with tens of thousands of portable radio stations of the battalion and even company level (RB, RBC, RBS, RBM) with a power of 1–3 W and a range of 10–15 km. There were 35,617 such radio stations as of January 1, 1941 units.

More than **100 tactical level radio stations per division**. Of course, this is very, very little. In a long article with the eloquent title "The Origins of the Defeat in Belarus", the author informs readers with a woeful sigh that the troops of the Western OVO were provided with *"regimental radio stations - by 41%, battalion - by 58%, company - by 70%"* (56) And he absolutely right - there was no regular staffing. According to the staffing table of a Red Army rifle division of the April 1941 model, in one howitzer artillery regiment there should have been 37 radio stations (for 36 howitzers), in an artillery regiment - 25 radio stations (for 24 guns), 3 radio stations in a rifle regiment and 5 radio stations in each from three battalions of the regiment. Contrary to the rumors propagated in multi-million copies, the radio was on both the armored train and the

tanks. Back in 1933, a special tank radio station 71-TK-1 was put into mass production. This short-wave transceiver

simplex radio station provided a communication range by telephone on the move up to 15 km, by telephone in parking lots - up to 30 km, in telegraph mode - up to 50 km. The BA-10/20 armored vehicles were also equipped with these radios. At least the radio was on the tank of the platoon commander (that is, on every third tank). In fact, by the beginning of the war, 35-40% of the tanks were equipped with transceivers. For example, in far from the best

staffing (163 tanks, i.e. half of the regular strength, and not a single T-34 or KB tank) of the 19th Panzer Division by June 10, 1941, there were: - 2 powerful RSB

radio stations; - 4 regimental
radio stations 5-AK, - 16 battalion
RB; - 85 tank 71-TK-1.

This is how it was - the Red Army of the June 1941 model. Is it any wonder that neither Zhukov, nor Timoshenko, nor Shaposhnikov, nor Meretskov, nor the entire "leading staff of the General Staff" expected "crushing cutting blows from the enemy"? They persistently and purposefully prepared to inflict them themselves. A regular meeting of the main Military Council of the Red Army was scheduled for June 25, 1941, at which the most final version of the PU-39 Field Manual was finally to be approved. The tasks assigned to the Red Army were formulated in this document with the utmost clarity: *"... If the enemy imposes a war on us, the Workers 'and*

Peasants' Red Army will be the most attacking of all the armies that have ever attacked. We will wage the war offensively, with the most resolute goal of completely defeating the enemy on his own territory. The combat operations of the Red Army will be carried out for destruction. The main goal of the Red Army will be to achieve a decisive victory and complete crushing of the enemy All personnel of the Workers 'and Peasants' Red

Army must be educated in the spirit of implacable hatred for the enemy and an unbending will to destroy him. As long as the enemy has not laid down his arms and surrendered, he will be mercilessly destroyed Every battle - offensive and

defensive - is aimed at defeating the enemy. But only a decisive offensive in the main direction, culminating in encirclement and relentless pursuit, leads to the complete destruction of the enemy's forces and means. Offensive combat is the main type of action of the Red Army ...

... In any conditions and in all cases, the powerful blows of the Red Army should lead to the complete destruction of the enemy and the rapid

achieving a decisive victory with little

bloodshed The offensive is the main type of battle that ensures the destruction of the enemy and the achievement of complete victory ... The offensive is an expression of superiority over the enemy.

Chapter

3 "ARMOR IS STRONG AND OUR TANKS ARE FAST..."

Simply declaring that *"The Red Army will be the most attacking of all the ever attacking armies"* is not enough. It was necessary to create tools appropriate for this task. The main striking force of the land armies of the middle of the 20th century was tank troops. No country in the world has made such great efforts - and has not achieved such great success - in the creation of this shock component of the armed forces, as the Soviet Union. No country in Europe had such obstacles and difficulties in the creation of armored forces as Germany had, which - we repeat this once again - under the terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty was completely forbidden to produce tanks or buy them abroad. As a result, at the time (early 1930s) when mass production of tanks began in the Soviet Union and the world's first large armored formations were created, the German Reichswehr conducted field exercises with cardboard models of non-existent tanks. After Hitler came to power and the refusal (first actual, and then formal) of Germany from fulfilling the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, the design of the first German combat training armored vehicles began. Here is how the main ideologist and creator of the German tank forces G. Guderian describes the history of their development: "... We considered it necessary to create for the time being such tanks that could be

used for training purposes ... Such tanks, designated Pz-I, could be manufactured by 1934 year and used as

training vehicles until the battle tanks were ready ... Of course, no one thought in 1932 that we would have to go into battle with these small training tanks ... "However, the Pz-I and quite

tangible benefits. All the same Guderian writes in his memoirs: "Schoolchildren who previously pierced our

models with their pencils to look inside were amazed by new armored vehicles ... " (16) While inquisitive (and,

fortunately, not knowing what awaits them in the near future) German boys were picking at the spotty cardboard boxes of fake "tanks", the number of real tanks, in service with the Red Army, reached 3,460 units. If, however, light machine-gun tankettes (such as the German Pz-I) are added to the number of real (i.e., those with cannon or flamethrower weapons) tanks, then the Soviet tank fleet will be 7,574 vehicles. There were so few of them on January 1, 1934. Three years later, on January 1, 1937, the "peaceful creative work of the Soviet people" increased the number of tanks in the Red Army by another 10 thousand units, to 17,280. (1, p. 601) A huge (uncomparable with the number of tanks in all countries of the world taken together) amount of armored vehicles made it possible to move on to the creation of tank (mechanized) units and formations. In 1930, the 1st separate mechanized brigade was formed. In 1932, this mechanized brigade was turned into a mechanized corps. On January 1, 1933, the Red Army had 2 mechanized corps, 5 mechanized brigades, 14 separate tank and mechanized regiments, 15 separate tank battalions, 69 mechanized and tank divisions. (38) Separate battalions and divisions were, of course, only the first, timid steps towards the creation of tank troops. The general line followed the path of creating large, operationally independent formations. Already in 1932, the Instruction "Drive into battle of independent mechanized formations" was adopted, and by the end of 1935 there were already 4 mechanized corps and 18 tank brigades in the Red Army. The following year, 1936, the number of tank brigades grew to thirty. (1, p. 604)

Meanwhile... Let's continue reading Guderian's memoirs: *"In view of the fact that the production of the main types of tanks dragged on for longer than we expected, General Lutz decided to build another intermediate type of tank, armed with a 20-mm automatic cannon and one machine gun."* The 20-mm "gun" in its ballistic characteristics was somewhat inferior to the parameters of the Soviet anti-tank 14.5-mm Degtyarev gun (while, of course, surpassing it in rate of fire). So the most accurate name for the new German "tank" Pz-II would be

"self-propelled anti-tank rifle with a machine gun." To perform the main tasks of the tank - the destruction of fire weapons, fortifications and enemy manpower - a projectile weighing 120–145 g, carrying (in different versions) from 4 to 9 g of explosive, was negligibly weak. Before the war in the USSR, guns of this caliber were installed only on fighter planes, but by no means on armored vehicles. Moreover, the tests and combat use of 20-mm air guns showed that "the defeat of manpower in open areas" is possible only with a direct hit on a person, while the fragmentation effect of a 20-mm "projectile" was completely insignificant. And from the end of 1935 to March 1937, the German industry produced (it's scary to say) 110 units of such "newest tanks" Pz-II. The first meeting of future

opponents took place on the battlefields of the civil war in Spain, Germany supplied the Francoists with 6-ton Pz-I machine-gun tankettes, fascist Italy sent the best that it had: a 3.5-ton Fiat-Ansaldo tank CV-3, armed with a machine gun on a turret in a fixed (!) Tower. The Soviet government supplied the Republicans with 10-ton T-26 tanks and 13-ton BT-5 tanks armed with a 45-mm cannon. The armor-piercing projectile of the Soviet 20K tank gun pierced the armor of enemy light tankettes at a distance of 1 km (it could have been from a greater distance, but it is almost impossible to hit a tank from such a distance), and a full-fledged high-explosive fragmentation projectile weighing 2.13 kg, creating a kill zone measuring 15x6 meters. The meeting made a strong impression both on the direct participants in the battles and on foreign military specialists.

"... Republican tanks with cannon armament, having small (machine-gun) enemy tanks against them, in all cases successfully overturned his tank attack ... Light tanks of the rebels, armed with one machine gun, were powerless in the fight against cannon tanks of the Republicans ... Tanks of the rebels, fearing counterattacks republican tanks with cannon armament, huddled up to the advancing infantry ... Republican tanks always acted boldly and decisively, inflicting heavy losses on enemy infantry, using fire and the weight of the tank for this purpose. They crushed firing points, anti-tank guns and even divisional artillery ... " (34)

"... The German tank, which is the basis of the armament of the new armored divisions in Germany, turned out to be a very mediocre and almost inapplicable weapon ... The German light tank (as we have already said and as all experts, both German and Italian, confirm) showed its complete failure. It is possible that sometimes, under especially favorable conditions, it can be used for purely reconnaissance purposes, but for combat in the proper sense, even for infantry escort, this tank is unacceptable ... In mutual struggle, the tanks of government troops are superior to the tanks of the rebels ... "(35) Future General of the Army D. Pavlov (who was one of the

first Soviet tankmen who arrived in Madrid in 1936) expressed his assessment of the experience of fighting in Spain "convexly and categorically", as required by the Field Manual of the Red Army:

"The experience of the warriors in Spain taught the Germans and showed them what kind of tanks they needed, because light German tanks in the fight against republican cannon tanks could not be compared and were shot mercilessly ..." (14)

Pavlov was right. The war in Spain "taught the Germans", and they finally understood - "what kind of tanks are needed." Two models of a full-fledged battle tank were designed and put into production: the Pz III, armed with a 37 mm cannon, and the Pz-IV with a short-barreled (the Germans called it "butt") 75 mm cannon. But "history" gave Hitler little time: before the end of 38, the German industry managed to produce 71 (seventy-one) Pz-III and 115 (one hundred and fifteen) Pz IV. The next year, the production of tanks was continued at the same pace "a teaspoon a day." By September 1, 1939, the Wehrmacht included 98 Pz-III, 211 Pz-IV and 280 captured light Czech tanks Pz-35 (t) / Pz-38 (t), armed with a 37-mm cannon. Of this number, 87 Pz-III, 198 Pz-IV and 167 Czech tanks were directly in combat units. Total: 452 tanks, rounded - half a thousand.

January 1, 1939 (9 months before the start of the World War) in the Red Army there were 11,765 tanks armed with a 45-mm cannon or flamethrower (T-26, BT-5, BT-7), and more than 412 tanks armed with 76 -mm cannon (multi-tower T-28 and T-35). More, because among the 3351 BT-7 tanks there was also a certain amount (most likely, almost all) from 154 BT-7A produced with a short-barreled 76-mm gun. Total: 12 thousand.

tanks with real artillery weapons. (1, p. 601) By September 1, 1939, there were even more of them. After analyzing this information, Soviet historians came to the only possible (for them) conclusion: "... *The position of the*

Soviet government could be likened to the position of a person who is being overwhelmed by the sea tide higher and higher: now the water has reached his knees, now it has reached his waist, up to chest, then to the neck ... Another moment - and the water will hide the head, if a person does not make some quick, decisive jump that will carry him to a rock inaccessible to the surf ..." (36)

Water (or some other liquid) "hid the head" of Soviet propagandist historians, and for almost half a century they babbled about the fact that Stalin and Molotov were passionately frightened by half a thousand German tanks, that they were trembling in horror at the thought that these tanks, having passed all of Poland (and then it was twice as wide as it is now), will rush in October 1939, under autumn rains, straight through the swamps of Belarus to Smolensk and Moscow. And that only a desperate desire to "jump" from the inexorable danger made them throw themselves into the "treacherous embrace" of the treacherous Ribbentrop... Let's not, however, waste time discussing the wild nonsense of communist propaganda. The question of what conclusions the military-political leadership of the USSR drew from the experience of the war in Spain deserves discussion.

The well-read reader is probably aware that "based on an incorrect assessment of the experience of using tanks in Spain, an erroneous decision was made to disband large tank formations." In this walking legend, every word is a mistake. The debut of Soviet tanks and tankers in Spain was more than successful. He did not cause any excessive "concern" in Moscow. 4 mechanized (tank) corps were disbanded, while tank brigades remained. The light tank brigade (LTB) according to the state of 1938 included 4 tank battalions (54 T-26 or BT linear tanks and 6 "artillery tanks" armed with a 76-mm cannon, each), a motorized rifle battalion, a reconnaissance battalion and other units. A total of 4,356 personnel, 258 tanks. (7, p. 276) This can hardly be called a "small tank formation." The conclusions from the practical experience of the war in Spain were drawn completely

correct and balanced, namely: "There is no need to run ahead of the locomotive." It is not necessary to set such operational tasks for tank troops, the fulfillment of which is still impossible with the available materiel. In order to translate this "impossibility" into the language of concrete figures, we will consider two interrelated parameters: the armor penetration of the most widespread types of anti-tank guns and the armor of tanks of the USSR and Germany.

	Вес снаряда, кг	Нач. скорость, м/сек	Бронепробиваемость на 100 м	Бронепробиваемость на 500 м
Немецкая 37- мм пушка	0.68	760	40мм/34мм	35 мм/28 мм
Советская 45- мм пушка	1.43	760	51 мм/43 мм	45мм/38 мм

Note: The first number refers to 90-degree shooting. to the armor, the second - to the meeting of the projectile with the armor at an angle of 60 degrees.

Броня, мм	T-26	BT-7	Pz-38(t)	Pz-III	Pz-IV
лоб	13	22	25	30	30
борт	10	10	15	30	30

Note: the thickness of the armor of the most massive in 39–40 years is indicated. tank models Pz-III D, E, F and Pz-IV D, E.

As can be seen from the tables above, **the armor of any German and Soviet tanks of 39-40. did not protect against anti-tank artillery fire.** All these tanks actually had only bulletproof armor. The only difference between the Soviet T-26 and BT tanks was that the bulletproof armor of the Soviet T-26 and BT tanks was rational, corresponding to the criterion of "reasonable sufficiency". To protect against small arms fire, armor of 10-15 mm was quite enough (by the way, the armored backs of the fighter pilot's seat were made of a sheet 7-8 mm thick, and this was quite enough to protect against bullets from rapid-fire rifle-caliber aircraft machine guns). German tanks, on the other hand, were aimlessly overloaded with 30 mm armor, which was redundant for protection against rifle and machine gun fire, and for protection against 45 mm Soviet shells.

anti-tank and tank guns - completely insufficient. With such a ratio of "shield and sword", a deep tank raid behind enemy lines could end in the complete destruction of the "herd" of light tanks that had broken away from their infantry and artillery. "... Tanks,

artillery, aviation are still auxiliary branches of the armed forces, working for the infantry, reduced to large combined arms formations ... Tanks by no means replace artillery, on the contrary, the offensive of tanks against an organized defense without powerful artillery support (emphasized by me. - M.S.) is associated with heavy losses ...

*Throwing independent tank groups into the depths of the defensive zone at the beginning of an infantry attack is unlikely to be appropriate, since these groups, acting **against an undisrupted anti-tank defense system, will suffer huge losses ...** " (34)* Is it necessary to understand all of the above

in such a way that did a light tank with bulletproof armor turn into an easy prey for anti-tank artillery in the early 40s, into an almost useless, but expensive toy? This absurd assumption under the brisk pen of Soviet "historians" has become an indisputable truth. True, only in one single case - in relation to the Soviet T-26 and BT ("hopelessly outdated ..." cardboard ", burned like candles ... shoot at sparrows from them ..."). Strange, but no one has ever written anything like this about enemy tanks, and no one has seen anything surprising in the fact that light German tanks with bulletproof armor and low-power weapons reached Moscow, Tikhvin and Rostov. And there is really nothing surprising in this. A tank is just a tool, and the result of its use depends primarily on the tactics of use, and more precisely, on the correspondence of this tactic to the properties (technical characteristics) of the weapon. What does this mean practically? The "hopeless" ratio for a tank between armor and armor penetration of an artillery shell is such only in a situation where

a lone tank is standing on a field as smooth as a table and waiting for a shell to hit it. Approximately this is how a target is fired at an artillery range, on the basis of which those tables of armor penetration appear, the data from which were given above. IN

real combat is somewhat different. First, the tank is moving. Even a T-26 crawling slowly across a rain-soaked field will overcome the last 600 m (it is almost impossible to hit a moving tank from a greater distance) to the firing positions of an anti-tank gun in 3 minutes. A high-speed BT, moving along the Ukrainian steppe scorched by the sun, will reduce this time by 2-3 times. Theoretically, the calculation of an anti-tank gun can fire 10-15 rounds per minute. But this is if you do not aim, but simply "peel into the white light." In reality, and taking into account the fact that recoil after a shot knocks down the sight, gunners have no more than 5 - 10 shots at their disposal. But the tank doesn't just crawl across the field, it crawls and shoots. The chances of the parties in the "duel" of a tank and an anti-tank gun are by no means the same. An armor-piercing projectile whistling one centimeter from the tank turret will not do him any harm, while a fragmentation projectile (even if it is a small-caliber 45-mm Soviet tank gun 20K projectile), which exploded at a distance of several meters from the firing position, will inevitably force the gun silence (a 45-mm projectile gave 100 lethal fragments, from which the calculation of an anti-tank gun was not protected by anything other than a tunic). Therefore, 5 - 10 shots, which we mentioned above, in a real battle are an unattainable dream for calculating an anti-tank gun - after the very first shots, the crew (well trained and trained crew) of the tank will detect the firing gun and a couple of fragmentation shells will brush the gun off the face of the earth. From these simple considerations, it follows

that the simplest and most effective way to break through anti-tank defenses is the same basic principle of concentration for all military affairs. Tank brigade (258 light tanks T-26 or BT). deploying in battle formation at a front of 2-3 km, it is guaranteed to break through the defense of the Wehrmacht infantry regiment, which includes only one anti-tank company with 12 anti-tank 37-mm guns. Even if the command of an infantry division manages to transfer an anti-tank fighter division (36 anti-tank 37-mm guns) to the breakthrough area as soon as possible, it will not be able to stop the attack of two hundred tanks. The loss of a certain number of tanks is inevitable in this case, but a breakthrough of the defense is also inevitable. This is "some number"

can be minimized (if not even zero) by artillery support for a tank attack. Massed artillery fire - paradoxical as it

sounds - acts as "additional armor" that allows light tanks with bulletproof armor to survive on the battlefield. The word "massive" appeared in the previous phrase not for the beauty of the syllable: the howitzer shoots with unaimed mounted fire, and it is necessary to shoot many, many times before one of the shells explodes next to the firing position of the enemy anti-tank gun. How much is "a lot"? According to Soviet pre-war standards - from 70 to 90 shells of 122-mm howitzers. However, there are no howitzers in a tank regiment (or tank brigade), but they are in the howitzer regiment of a rifle division. In other words, interaction is needed. A very simple word, with a very clear meaning, on which almost everything depends in battle. The field manual PU-39 categorically demanded: *"No actions of troops on the battlefield are possible without the support of artillery and are unacceptable without it ... An attack by tanks of the front line must in all cases be provided with artillery support and is not allowed without it ..."* It was necessary to interact with a rifle division, in the howitzer regiment of which (according to the state of April 1941) had 36 howitzers. A howitzer regiment will "throw out" a thousand shells necessary for the guaranteed destruction of a German anti-tank company (17 guns) in 15–20 minutes. True, for this you need to know the main thing: where to shoot? On which particular square of the topographic map should these thousand shells be fired? Therefore, we need reconnaissance (including the most accurate of all types of reconnaissance - reconnaissance in combat), we need stable communications, artillery fire adjustment, and much more that turns cannons, tanks, machine guns into a single military mechanism. The most important "detail" of this "mechanism" was, is and will be the commander. Trained, experienced, courageous commander. In the presence of such a commander and with well-functioning interaction with artillery, a tank unit armed with only light tanks with bulletproof armor breaks through the defenses of an infantry division with iron inevitability.

No matter how well the interaction mechanism described above is debugged, it will inevitably fall apart in a couple of hours after the tanks break through the enemy's first line of defense and leave for

tactical depth. Artillery and infantry of an ordinary rifle division cannot move at the speed of a tank, and tanks deprived of support can count on only one assistant in the depth of enemy battle formations - panic. In this sense, the tank raid develops according to the same laws that determined the success or failure of the cavalry raid in the wars of the previous century. If the defenders were seized by panic, if the commanders were unable to cope with this panic, then the felling of the fugitives began - the most destructive method of action for the cavalry. If the commanders in these decisive minutes of the battle held control and subordinates in their hands, then the practically defenseless equestrian lava was mercilessly exterminated by artillery and machine guns of the defenders. In essence, the same thing, but adjusted for other technical means of combat, also happens with a group of light tanks that have broken away from their infantry and artillery. This very simple theory was confirmed by the practice

of the war in Spain. Analyzing the experience of this war, Soviet military experts made absolutely correct conclusions: they abandoned the previously existing "tank-throwing" moods, and the possibility

drawing independent tank compounds of "crushing cutting blows" were carried into the future. Close, but not yet today. And instead of drawing arrows on maps and squares of organizational structures, they began to work on logistical preparation for this future. *"When drawing conclusions from the experience of the war in Spain, it is necessary to take into account all its specific conditions ... If in Spain there were only the beginnings of a deep offensive operation, then in a big war, due to the enormous saturation of modern armies with technical means of struggle, deep **crushing operations to encircle and destroy the enemy...**" (34)*

What changes in the technical equipment of mechanized (tank) formations were required in order for them to be able to conduct "deep crushing operations" in the operational rear of the enemy, in isolation from the main (infantry) mass of their troops? A detailed answer to such a question will require the writing of a separate military-scientific monograph. In the most concise and inevitably concise,

In a simplified form, we can formulate the following list of necessary technical improvements:

- to strengthen the armor of tanks to a level that provides protection against fire from anti-tank artillery of the most common calibers, and from any direction (forehead, side, stern);
- to strengthen the tank's own artillery

armament to a level that allows an artillery duel with the enemy's anti-tank and regimental artillery;

- to equip howitzer artillery of mechanized (tank) formations with mechanized traction equipment with speed and maneuverability comparable to the speed and maneuverability of tanks;
- to land the infantry of mechanized formations on armored personnel carriers with the speed and maneuverability of tanks.

No country in the world was able to achieve such a level of technical equipment of its army either by the beginning or even by the end of World War II, although individual elements of the tank formations of the future appeared already during the war. The

huge design and technological "reserve" accumulated in the 30s in the tank industry of the USSR allowed the Red Army to take several steps towards this "future" before anyone else in the world, the main component of the qualitative leap was the creation of two new types of tanks with full-fledged anti-ballistic armor : medium T-34 and heavy KV. The combat survivability of the new Soviet tanks was also increased by the use of a diesel engine that runs on fuel that is much less dangerous in relation to fire and vapor explosions. Another indisputable advantage of the diesel engine is its efficiency, as a result of which the much heavier Soviet tanks had a greater range than their German opponents. Thus, the cruising range of German tanks Pz-III and Pz-IV did not exceed 150-200 km, while the T-34 could travel 300 km at one gas station (the latest modifications of the T-34/76 had a cruising range of more than 400 km), and HF - 250 km. Diesel engines were also installed on light BT tanks of the latest modification (BT-7M), while a phenomenal speed of 62 km / h and a cruising range of up to 400 km were achieved. Incredibly, even in terms of ground clearance, the 48-ton KV tank thanks to the use of a wide track

outnumbered its opponents (specific pressure on the ground is only 0.77 kg / cm. sq. vs. 1 kg / cm. sq. for medium German tanks). The powerful armor protection of the T-34 and KV tanks was complemented by equally powerful weapons. The long-barreled (unlike the short-barreled "cigarette butt" on the German Pz-IV) 76-mm F-34 cannon with a long range of aimed fire made it possible to destroy both any German tanks and light field shelters at a relatively safe distance (at a distance of 4 km a projectile guns F-34 pierced brickwork half a meter).

The Germans, on the other hand, were hopelessly behind with the rearmament of tank units - by June 22, 1941, they had not created a single new type of tank, and all the improvement in the armor protection of existing models was reduced to installing an additional 30-mm frontal plate on the Pz-III tanks of the H and J series and increasing up to 50 mm thickness of the armor of the forehead of the hull and turret on the Pz-IV series F. The side surface of the turret, high sheer sides and sterns of German tanks of even the newest modifications still remained covered only by bulletproof 30 mm armor, which was pierced by the fire of the Soviet "forty-five" on the maximum (according to the conditions of aimed shooting) range of 600–700 m. In improving the armament of tanks, the Germans also did not go beyond the partial modernization of existing models. Namely, medium (by German standards, "medium") Pz-III tanks, starting from the G series, began to be produced with a 50-mm KwK-38 cannon, later the "troikas" of the previous E and F series were re-equipped with the same cannon. the high-explosive projectile of the 50-mm KwK-38 gun weighed even a little less (1.81 kg versus 2.14 kg) than the HE shell of the Soviet 45-mm 20K tank gun. In other words, the modernized German "medium" tanks in terms of armament only approached the level of the "hopelessly outdated" Soviet T-26 and BT tanks. A serious qualitative improvement was only the creation and commissioning of the Wehrmacht infantry divisions of the new 50-mm Pak 38 anti-tank gun, although it did not fully solve the problem of fighting new Soviet tanks. Of course, in the future, the Wehrmacht's anti-tank defense system was radically improved, but for a short period of time (summer - autumn 1941), the Soviet "sword" in its development certainly overtook the German "shield".

Броня, мм	KB	T-34	Pz-IV F
Лоб	75	45	50
борт	75	40-45	30
башня	90-75	52	50-30
корма	70-60	45	22

Тип и название орудия	Вес снаряда, кг	Нач. скорость, м/сек	Начальная энергия, кДж	Бронепробиваемость на 100 м	Бронепробиваемость на 500м
Немецкая ПТО 50-мм Pak-38	2,06	830	710	88 мм / 68 мм	75 мм / 58 мм
Советская дивизионная 76-мм Ф-22	6,30	690	1500	82 мм / 69 мм	75 мм / 61 мм
Немецкая танковая 50-мм KwK-38	2,06	690	490	54 мм / 46 мм	46 мм / 41 мм
Советская танковая 76-мм Ф-34	6,30	662	1380	80 мм / 65 мм	69 мм / 55 мм

As you can see, the Soviet "divisionka" F-22 and the F-34 tank gun were guaranteed to pierce the flat forehead of the heaviest (for the summer of 1941) German tanks. It is also worth noting that the high armor penetration of the Soviet 76-mm F-22 and F-34 guns was combined with a large weight and a record high kinetic energy of an armor-piercing projectile (three times in weight and twice as energetic as the German anti-tank Pak-38 projectile).). All this, combined with an unusually powerful weight of an explosive charge for armor-piercing shells of that time (76-mm BR-350A / B shells were equipped with 120–155 g of TNT, which, for example, is ten times more than the weight of an explosive charge of a 45-mm armor-piercing projectile BR -240) provided "armor impact" sufficient to destroy the tank and incapacitate its crew. The situation was aggravated by the use of carburetor engines running on flammable gasoline on all German tanks without exception. On the other hand, the best German tank gun KwK-38 for the summer of 1941

was practically useless in the fight against the KB tank (whose armor it did not penetrate from any direction even with

shooting at point-blank range), and in the battle against the "thirty-four" the crew of the German "medium" tank Pz-III could only count on a super-successful hit in the gap between the tracked rollers (in this area of the T-34 hull, the sheer 45-mm side armor has no slope and can be penetrated by the KwK-38 cannon at short distances). True, for this, the German tank had to somehow get closer to the T-34, which could shoot it at a kilometer range ... It is not surprising that already in June - July 1941, in the reports of the commanders of tank divisions and mechanized corps of the Red Army, there are many messages of this type: *"KV tanks confuse the enemy, and in all cases his tanks retreated ... there were cases when one KV tank disabled up to 10-14 enemy tanks ... the fire of our tanks from the first two or three shots destroyed the tanks enemy... enemy tanks ignite from the fire of our 76-mm tank guns... when our tanks, especially KV, appear, the infantry flees, and the tanks do not accept battle"* (63).

It would not be possible to run far from the tank, so the Wehrmacht infantry did not have to run, but to fight against the T-34 and KV. The frontal 75-mm armor plates of the KV tank had a slope of 65 and 30 degrees. Comparing these figures with the armor penetration parameters of the latest long-barreled (barrel length is 60 calibers, while the KwK-38 has "only" 42) German 50-mm Pak-38 anti-tank gun, we come to the conclusion that hitting a 48-ton monster in the forehead the German artillerymen could not. The only possible tactic to combat the KV could only be shooting at the side, from an ambush, at an extremely short distance. The front plate of the T-34 hull, although it had a thickness of "only" 45 mm (the cast tower had a wall thickness of 52 mm), was installed at an unusually large slope (60 degrees), which even purely geometrically increases the effective armor thickness to 90 mm. In practice, such a large slope of the armor plate usually led to the ricochet of the armor-piercing "blank". The best German anti-tank gun could hit the T-34 only by shooting at the side of the hull (armor thickness - 40 mm, angle of inclination - 40 degrees) or from a short distance into the tower. Another weak point of the "thirty-four" throughout the war remained the driver's hatch installed on the frontal sheet, which, with a direct hit by an armor-piercing projectile, "failed".

With all this, neither the T-34 nor the KV were "wonder weapons". Absolutely invulnerable tanks, of course, do not exist, and the very term "protivoprotivoprotivodnoy booking" is a convention. The shells are very different. The German 150-mm cannon (not to be confused with a howitzer!) dispersed a projectile weighing 43 kg. up to a speed of 865 m / s, which gives a kinetic energy of 16 mJ, which is about 10 times the initial energy of the F-22 cannon projectile and 82 times the muzzle energy of the most massive 37-mm anti-tank gun in the Wehrmacht. But this is far from the limit of the capabilities of field cannon artillery. The Soviet 210-mm gun Br-17 (weight in combat position 44 tons) fired a projectile weighing 133 kg and a muzzle velocity of 800 m/s, which corresponds to a muzzle energy of 43 mJ. A shot of guns of such power at a tank gave the impression of a lightning strike, pierced the tank through or tore off a multi-ton tower from it. That's just to the real organization of anti-tank defense, all this "exotic" does not

has nothing to do.

The mere fact of the presence of a certain weapon capable of destroying a certain object does not yet give the slightest basis for tactical, much less operational conclusions. Let's explain this with a couple of simple examples. The ax is undoubtedly capable of cutting the cervical vertebrae and separating the head of the heaviest and strongest person from the body. Which, however, does not mean that the presence of axes makes it easy to destroy any enemy army, although it ultimately consists of people with heads on a fragile neck. It is also necessary to take into account the number of axes, the number of enemies, their weapons, the distance between opponents in battle and operation, etc. Although in some unique case (a night attack on a sleeping sentry) an ax can be useful. Moreover, with an ax you can fight against a tank. It also happened: *"The brave man crept up the ditch from the rear, quickly climbed onto the tank and, with blows from a sapper ax, disabled the machine gun and the crew of the enemy tank."* These are lines from the memoirs of Army General D. D. Lelyushenko. The illustrious commander ended the war in Prague, as commander of the 4th Guards Tank Army, and saw German tanks not in pictures. Yes, and Komsomol member Ivan Pavlovich Sereda is not a fictional person, but a real participant in the war, awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for his feat. And yet, despite

a large number of brave men and sapper axes, it was not possible to destroy all German tanks in such a simple and cheap way ...

If the destruction of a tank with the help of a sapper ax can be classified as "miracles that sometimes happen", then the consequences of the massive use of PTABs could, at first glance, be much more serious.

In TsKB-22, under the leadership of I. A. Larionov, an ultra-light (1.5-1.7 kg in various modifications) anti-tank bomb with a shaped charge capable of burning through armor up to 60 mm. Both field tests, and combat use (for the first time - on the Kursk Bulge), and inspection of wrecked German tanks on the battlefield confirmed the indisputable fact that the PTAB cumulative charge actually penetrates the upper armor plates of any German tank, and the armor effect of a high-speed jet of molten metal is such that incapacitates the crew, causes the detonation of ammunition and the ignition of the tank. The Il-2 attack aircraft took 192 PTABs into flight in 4 cassettes (48 pieces in each). When dropped from a height of 200 m, the total destruction area occupied a strip of 15x190 meters, which ensured the guaranteed destruction of any Wehrmacht armored vehicles. In other words, one attack aircraft could theoretically destroy half a dozen heavy tanks marching in a dense marching column. Mass production of shaped charges did not require, moreover, the consumption of scarce non-ferrous metals, and the main "stuffing" of the cumulative projectile - a mixture of hexogen with TNT - was adopted by the Soviet Navy (for equipping naval mines and torpedoes) back in February 1941 (87) And what, after the appearance of the PTABs, the German "tigers" disappeared from the battlefields? Or, at least, did the PTABs make anti-tank artillery and self-propelled "tank destroyers" redundant? Yes, indeed, the 150-mm German gun, as well as the 88-mm anti-aircraft gun (projectile weight 9 kg at an initial speed of

820 m / s), pierced the armor of any Soviet tanks, including the T-34, and under certain conditions - and KV. But what did this practically mean? Even in the conditions of a "knightly tournament", where the number of participants from each side is strictly the same, the chances of success for the gunners would be very doubtful. The weight of the monstrous 150 mm gun exceeds 12 tons,

the dimensions are higher than a person's height, the gun crew is not even covered by a thin frontal shield (and this is not surprising, given that the long-range gun was not intended for firing at the forefront). To deploy the gun in the direction of the advancing tanks, even more so - to change the firing position, without a powerful tractor it is impossible in principle. Even the theoretical "rate of fire" of a 150-mm cannon does not exceed one shot per minute, and in fact there is little chance of a second shot in a battle with a tank for this huge gun, noticeable from a mile away. The use of such a weapon as anti-tank weapons was never planned; accordingly, the personnel of the gun crew were not trained to shoot at tanks. Nevertheless, in the event that an enemy tank attack, by pure chance, occurs in the area of the firing position of a 150-mm cannon, it is capable, with luck, of knocking out one, and maybe two tanks, before being itself destroyed by return fire .

Now let's move on from the situation of the "tournament" to the realities of war. In each regiment of the infantry division of the Wehrmacht, according to the staffing table, there should have been (which does not mean that they were in each division) two 150-mm guns.

Two pieces. There is no need to even talk about transferring the 12-ton guns of the neighboring regiment to the breakthrough site in a matter of minutes of a tank battle. Not much more "mobile" and 105-mm guns (in a number of divisions they replaced the missing 150-mm), weighing 5.6 tons and equipped with six horses. In a tank battalion of a tank regiment of a Soviet tank division, there are approximately 50 (the exact number depended on the type of combat vehicles) tanks. Strictly speaking, on this, the whole discussion of the possibility of solving the problem of anti-tank defense with the help of 150-mm guns can be closed. Using their heavy guns, the Wehrmacht infantry regiment could destroy one platoon (3 tanks), which accidentally ran into the firing position of 150-mm guns. There can be no talk of repulsing a massive tank attack - a company of T-34 or KV tanks (not to mention larger-scale units) will "roll out" heavy guns on the ground before they have time to fire a dozen shots ... Strictly speaking, and 50 new -mm anti-tank guns Pak-38 in the infantry regiment of the Wehrmacht was (again, it was according to the staffing

table, and not in reality!) **Only 2 units**, but they were

light enough (986 kg), and the command of the division could (if these guns were in the required quantity) concentrate them in the tank breakthrough zone. In the summer of 1941, a Wehrmacht infantry division could only have **6 Pak-38 units and 66 units of 37-mm anti-tank Pak-36 units**, which still remained the most massive anti-tank weapon of the German army. It is noteworthy that it was after the meeting with the "thirty-four" that the German 37-mm Pak-36 got its nickname "door knocker" (the meaning of this black soldier's humor was that the projectile could knock on the armor, but "go inside" - no). No less eloquent are the specific figures for the loss of "beaters". So, by November 1, 1941, the Wehrmacht lost **2,479 37-mm anti-tank guns on the Eastern Front, which is 1.42 times more than** the losses of all artillery systems of the divisional and corps level (caliber from 75 mm to 150 mm inclusive), taken together . (88, p. 381) As for the

88-mm German anti-aircraft guns, they were not included in the infantry (as well as tank and motorized) divisions of the Wehrmacht at all, since all anti-aircraft batteries in the armed forces of Germany were organizationally part of the composition of the Luftwaffe and the "land" commanders did not obey. Moreover, anti-aircraft guns of this caliber had nothing to do in the combat formations of the troops. To protect troops on the battlefield from raids by enemy attack aircraft and dive bombers, you need a mobile anti-aircraft gun with a high rate of fire with a relatively small reach in height. Such guns with a caliber from 20 mm to 40 mm were in service with the ground forces (for example, according to the staffing table of the Red Army tank division, 12 anti-aircraft 37-mm automatic guns were supposed to be). A heavy (combat weight 5.2 tons) 88-mm anti-aircraft gun with a height reach of 11-14 km was designed to defend large objects from high-flying long-range bombers. The technique of firing at a high-speed high-altitude target has nothing to do with direct fire at a tank, the dimensions and weight of an 88-mm anti-aircraft gun are very far from the requirements for an inconspicuous and highly mobile anti-tank gun. Yes, indeed, finding themselves in a hopeless situation after meeting with new Soviet tanks, especially after the heavy KB tank appeared on the battlefield, the Germans were forced to engage in the most ridiculous improvisations, like

the use of 5-ton anti-aircraft guns and 12-ton long-range guns to fight tanks, but you probably shouldn't pass off "need for virtue" ... Much more dangerous

than multi-ton long-range or anti-aircraft German guns, the enemy of new Soviet tanks was light, weighing 980 grams, 50-mm sub-caliber projectile. This projectile had a rather complex design, consisting of an armor-piercing core and a shell (the so-called "pallet"). When the projectile hit the target, the pallet made of mild steel was crushed, and the hard, sharp-headed core made of tungsten carbide pierced the armor. This design provided a significantly lower weight of a sub-caliber projectile (compared to a conventional armor-piercing "blank") and, as a result, significantly greater speed and armor penetration. So, the 50-mm Pak-38 anti-tank gun pierced 130 mm armor with a PzGr-40 sub-caliber projectile at a 100-meter distance. This, of course, was enough to destroy any tank, including the heavy KV. Even the miserable 20 mm cannon of the German light tank Pz-II from a distance of 100 m pierced 49 mm of armor with a tungsten carbide core projectile. However, "even the sun has spots." Just as the KB tank was not an "absolute weapon", so the "tungsten" projectile did not solve all the problems of anti-tank defense, and it was by no means accidental that it did not displace the usual, "caliber" projectile, and was soon completely removed from service.

The first and most important drawback of sub-caliber shells was their absence. Tungsten carbide in an anti-tank projectile is an expensive exotic, and Germany could not scatter (in the truest sense of the word) the most scarce alloying element (tungsten), necessary for the production of special steels, during a protracted war. The volume of production of "tungsten" shells was tens, then - a few percent of the total production of anti-tank ammunition, and at the beginning of 1944 it was completely stopped. Secondly, the speed, and hence the armor penetration of small-weight and caliber projectiles, rapidly decreases with distance. In aerodynamics, this is called the "square cube law" (aerodynamic drag depends on the square of the linear dimensions, and the inertia force depends on the cube, so a light small-caliber projectile loses its initial speed faster than

heavy projectile of a larger caliber). With regard to the sub-caliber projectile, the effect of this law was aggravated by poor aerodynamics and high resistance of the "pallet". As a result, already at a distance of 500 m, the armor penetration of a 37-mm "tungsten" projectile decreased to the level of an ordinary "blank", and at a distance of 1 km it dropped to zero. In fact, firing a sub-caliber projectile at a heavy Soviet tank was a kind of deadly "Russian roulette": the calculation of the anti-tank gun had to let the KB to an extremely close distance and hit the steel monster from the first shot. Thirdly, a tank is not a balloon, which is enough to pierce with a needle. In the fight against a tank, it is not the very fact of the appearance of a through hole in the armor that is important, but what is called "armor impact". Deviating somewhat from the chronology of the story, we note one interesting document, the report of the NIIBT GBTU commission, which at the end of July 1943 examined 30 German "panthers" shot down in the battle of Kursk. Almost all the wrecked and burnt tanks had two or three or more holes (mainly from 76-mm shells carrying a powerful explosive charge). "Panther" with tail number 634 needed to get 7 holes (three - from a 76-mm projectile) before it burned down. (83) Setting fire to a diesel KB or T-34 was hardly easier. The sub-caliber projectile, in principle, could not carry an explosive charge, and the mass of the tungsten carbide "pike" was relatively small in order to create a powerful jet of hot micro-shards of pierced armor. The sub-caliber core of the 20-mm projectile was nothing more than a hard "nail", which could cause serious damage to the tank only if it hit some particularly vulnerable unit. To these common shortcomings (you can call them the word "features") of sub-caliber shells in the case of firing at the T-34 tank, another one was added: a tendency to ricochet or "tip over" characteristic of all pointed shells of small diameter and large elongation, followed by the destruction of the projectile upon meeting with armor at angles of more than 30-40 degrees. The general conclusion should probably be formulated as follows: in the summer of 1941, the Wehrmacht did not have weapons with which it would be possible to repel a massive attack of large formations of new Soviet tanks (T-34 and KB), but this statement does not refute that

the fact that individual tanks could be destroyed by anti-aircraft guns, heavy long-range guns, and sub-caliber armor-piercing shells in especially favorable conditions for the defenders.

Chapter

4

Qualitatively new technical characteristics of the Soviet T-34 and KB tanks (anti-ballistic armor, powerful armament, diesel engine, high cross-country ability and long range) in their totality meant the creation of a fundamentally new tool for warfare. T-34s and KBs could largely independently (without waiting for the artillery to approach) suppress enemy firepower at the forefront, and then support infantry with aimed fire when breaking through enemy defenses to the entire tactical depth. And yet "no one branch of the armed forces replaces the other." There are a number of tasks that a 76.2-mm tank gun cannot solve in principle. For example, to suppress a mortar battery, which, hiding behind a hillside, does not allow infantry to rise. For this purpose, you need a howitzer with its hinged firing trajectory. Another common type of target that is inaccessible to a "three-inch" projectile weighing 6.2 kg is long-term defensive structures. Not to mention concrete bunkers, even to destroy a properly built dugout "in three rolls" ("wood-and-earth firing point" in a scientific way), a 122-mm or even 152-mm howitzer projectile is required (shells of systems of this caliber weighed, respectively, 20–22 and 40–45 kg). It was precisely the impossibility of an offensive without systematic support from divisional and corps artillery that previously limited the depth of a tank strike. The Soviet military leadership, together with designers and industry, did a great many years of work, which made it possible in the early 40s to create such combat formations in which not tanks huddle up to the firing positions of their artillery, but artillery (up to heavy) moves after the tanks. It moves with the same maneuverability as tanks, although at a lower speed. Of course, it would be very good to provide both high security and the speed of movement of heavy guns over rough terrain, equal to the speed of tanks. And such a task is solvable - but for this we need a combat vehicle,

called "self-propelled artillery". Alas, none of the armies participating in World War II could afford such a luxury as the complete replacement of towed heavy artillery with self-propelled guns.

For towing artillery of mechanized (tank) formations, as well as corps regiments and artillery regiments of the RGK, at the end of the 30s, four types of tracked tractors were developed, differing in engine power, tractive effort and allowable weight of the towed gun (trailer), in complexity and cost. All of them had a tarpaulin-covered platform for placing gun crew and ammunition, were equipped with a powerful winch for "self-pulling", three of the four were equipped with relatively diesel engines, i.e., fireproof fuel. (17)

	N, л.с.	Тяга, т	Вес прицепа, т	Скорость, км/час
СТЗ-НАТИ (СТЗ-5)	56, бен.	?	4,5	21-15
С-2	105, диз.	6,2	10	26 - 10 - 15
«Коминтерн»	131, диз.	6,8	17	30 - ? - ?
«Ворошиловец»	400, диз.	13-17	22	42-20-16

Note: in the "Speed" column, the first digit is without a trailer on the highway, the second is with a trailer on the highway, the third is with a trailer on rough terrain

Now let's compare the numbers indicated in the table with the weight of the most common artillery systems. As you know, the heaviest guns that were in service with the rifle, motorized and tank divisions of the Red Army were 152-mm howitzers and 85-mm anti-aircraft guns. The weight of both systems was in the range of 4.5–4.3 tons. Thus, even the simplest and cheapest STZ-5 could provide towing of any divisional artillery systems. Along with 152-mm howitzers, the corps artillery regiments were armed with much heavier systems: the 122-mm A-19 gun (weight 7.8 tons) and the 152-mm ML-20 howitzer gun (7.9 tons). To tow tools of this weight, the Chelyabinsk Tractor Plant developed and put into mass production a powerful diesel tractor C-2. The traction characteristics of this tracked vehicle provided towing

practically all guns of divisional and corps artillery, as well as the evacuation of wrecked light tanks. Despite the fact that the production of S-2 had to be stopped already in 1942 (the production facilities of the Chelyabinsk plant were transferred to the mass production of tanks), reliable and powerful tractors of this type were in service with Soviet artillery until the early 50s. In the artillery

regiments and individual divisions of large and special power of the RGK, guns of a completely different "weight category" were used: the 203 mm B-4 howitzer (19 tons), the 152 mm Br-2 cannon (19.5 tons), the 280 mm mortar Br -5 (19.7 tons), 305 mm Br-18 howitzer (45.7 tons). These systems threw projectiles weighing from 100 to 330 kg, and their use was planned mainly for the destruction of reinforced concrete pillboxes. Relatively mass among all this exotic artillery was only 203 - mm B-4 howitzer (871 units), but it was not intended for joint operations with mechanized formations. Nevertheless, the tracked vehicles created for towing heavy artillery systems also played an important role in the formation of new mechanized corps, since their high traction characteristics made it possible to use artillery tractors to evacuate wrecked tanks from the battlefield. The most common heavy tracked tractor was the Komintern,

produced at the Kharkov Locomotive Plant No. Comintern (yes, that was the name of the largest tank factory in the world). Equipped with a 130-horsepower engine, the tractor developed a speed of up to 30 km / h on the highway and had a cruising range of 220 km. In extremely low gear (at a speed of 2.6 km / h), the Komintern could haul heavy artillery systems at an elevation of up to 40 angular degrees. The reliability and maintainability of this machine can be judged by the fact that from September 1, 1942 until the end of the war, only 56 tractors of this type were irretrievably lost! (17) In 1940, the production of "Cominterns" was curtailed, and the released

production capacities of plant No. 183 were used for the mass production of "Voroshilovets" - a caterpillar tractor with absolutely phenomenal tactical and technical characteristics. The design was based on a 400-horsepower V-2 tank diesel engine (not a single German tractor or tank of that time had an engine of such power). Without

trailer, the tractor developed a speed of 42 km / h on the highway and had a cruising range of 390 km, with a full load - 20 km / h and 240 km. In other words, "Voroshilovets" was able to move a heavy howitzer from one flank of the army's defense line to the other within one light day and at one refueling. The maximum traction force of 17 tons (in winter, due to slipping of the tracks, it decreased to 13 tons) made it possible to tow the heaviest artillery systems, two Voroshilovets even coped with the monstrous 305 mm Br-18 howitzer weighing 45.7 tons. As an evacuation tractor, Voroshilovets was able to pull a five-turreted T-35 tank, two tractors could tow a padded KV (48 tons) from the battlefield. The heavy-duty machine turned out to be quite reliable and hardy - despite the cessation of mass production in the fall of 1941, 336 Voroshilovtsy survived until the end of the war (some of them took part in the Victory Parade), and then continued to carry out military service until the beginning of the 50s. (17)

The Germans went the other way. For the transportation of artillery pieces and ammunition, a whole "line" of half-track tractors with carburetor engines with power from 100 to 185 hp was developed. and the maximum weight of the towed object is from 3 to 18 tons. In terms of towing speed, German half-track tractors were significantly superior to any Soviet ones, with the exception of the Voroshilovets. This is a fact. In assessing this fact (as well as any others), it is advisable to take a balanced approach and not rush to conclusions. The method of mounted firing of howitzer artillery does not at all require the continuous movement of guns after the advancing tanks. The speed of towing is not "high" or "low" in itself - only **the ratio of the speed of movement of artillery to the rate of advance of a tank division has practical meaning**. The most massive and cheapest tractor STZ-5 in 4 hours of movement at a speed of 15 km / h will crawl along the road 60 km of the route. When driving on complete impassability, the required march time will increase by 1.5–2 times, i.e., up to 6–8 hours. Quite acceptable indicators of the mobility of artillery of motorized formations, the rate of advance of which, even theoretically, did not exceed 30–50 km per day. Finally, do not forget that the new diesel tanks (KV, T-34, BT-7M) could well be used as

caterpillar tractor, and the tractor is much more powerful and fast than any artillery tractor of that time.

With all this, "the stock does not pull the pocket," and the presence of high-speed artillery tractors in the Wehrmacht was its great advantage. The issue is more complicated with the assessment of cross-country ability, without which the "towing speed" turns from a real tactical characteristic into a paper fiction. On a moderately bad dirt road, the German half-track moved confidently, but in a real Russian muddy road, the two front (passive) wheels went down the hub into the mud and, like a plow, "plowed" the soil until the engine stalled. In a certain sense, the German half-track tractors somehow anticipated the modern "parquet jeeps": beautiful, comfortable, but at the same time inferior to the semi-tarpaulin "UAZ" in our off-road patency. Soviet tractors and caterpillar tractors crawled slowly, but surely. As for the quantity, in this case (almost the only one) Germany overtook the Soviet Union. Until the end of 1939, 5.8 thousand half-track tractors of five different types were produced (Sd.Kfz - 11/6/7/8/9), the next year about 6 thousand were produced, a little less than 7 thousand were produced in 1941, in total - about 18.5 thousand tractors (the indicated number did not include the half-track chassis used for the production of armored personnel carriers Sd.Kfz - 250/251). In the Soviet Union, the deployment of the mass production of specialized artillery tractors was

seriously late. Until the end of 1940, 1,798 Kominterns and about 600 Voroshilovtsevs were produced. Taking into account the presence of 2,839 STZ-5 tractors (and not counting the S-2, whose production was just beginning in the fall of 40), about 5.2 thousand tractors are being recruited. In 1941, it was planned to produce another 5 thousand STZ-5, 2 thousand S-2, 700 "Voroshilovtsev", i.e., to more than double the number of caterpillar tractors of the Red Army. Grandiose plans were successfully carried out. By the beginning of June 1941, there were **6.7 thousand STZ-5 and S-2 tractors, more than 2.5 thousand Kominterns and Voroshilovtsevs in service**, that is, about 9.2 thousand specialized artillery tractors. (17, p. 31) This number already **exceeded the total number (8.7 thousand) of heavy artillery systems** in service with the Red Army (3,817 howitzers

152 mm. 2,603 152-mm howitzer-guns, 1,255 122-mm cannons, 871 203-mm howitzers, 147 large and special power guns). (9, pp. 248–250) In addition, even before the start of open mobilization, the troops had about 28 thousand agricultural tractors, which was more than twice the **total number of “objects for towing”**, i.e. divisional howitzers of 122 caliber mm and heavy anti-aircraft guns of caliber 76 mm and 85 mm. It was on such a “weighty, rough, visible” material base that the plans for the deployment of tank formations of unprecedented power were implemented: the mechanized corps of the Red Army.

The decision to form eight mechanized corps of a new type was approved by People's Commissar of Defense Timoshenko on June 9, 1940, the staffing of the mechanized corps was approved on July 6, 1940 (the time gap is probably due to the annexation of the Baltic States, which took place in the second half of June, which diverted the attention of the country's top leadership) . The distribution of the mechanized corps was quite logical. Two corps were deployed in the main strategic directions, in the Kiev and Belorussian (later renamed Western) Special Military Districts, one corps was received by the Leningrad and Odessa districts (flanks of the future front), as well as the central Moscow military district and located on the troubled border with the Japanese-occupied China, the Trans-Baikal Military District (in fact, 5 MK was stationed much south of Lake Baikal - in Mongolia). A total of 8 mechanized corps. In October 1940, it was decided to form another mechanized corps, the ninth in order and in number, in the Kiev OVO. In the Transcaucasian and Central Asian districts, one separate tank division was formed.

All mechanized corps of the Red Army had a single structure. The mechanized corps included:

- **two armored divisions;**
- **motorized division; - a separate motorcycle regiment; - Numerous special**

forces (a separate communications battalion, a separate motor-engineering battalion, a corps air squadron, etc.).

In fact, the mechanized corps included three "tank" divisions, since the Soviet motorized division included a tank regiment and surpassed the German tank division in terms of the regular (275 units) number of tanks. In fact, the difference between a motorized division and a tank division was in a different structure, in a different ratio between tank and motorized rifle units. There were four regiments in the tank division: two tank, motorized rifle and artillery. The motorized division also had four regiments: two motorized rifle regiments, a tank regiment and an artillery regiment. In addition, each division had

its own communications battalion, its own reconnaissance battalion, pontoon-bridge battalion, anti-aircraft artillery battalion, and numerous engineering services. A separate anti-tank fighter division was prudently introduced into the composition of the motorized division (in case of meeting with enemy tanks). Obviously, in developing just such a structure, the Soviet command

sought to ensure that the corps as a whole had maximum operational independence. The corps commander also had a tank "ram" in his hands - four tank regiments of tank divisions, armed mainly with medium and heavy tanks, and his own artillery group - three artillery regiments on a mechanical (tractor) traction, capable of breaking into the enemy defenses in the breakthrough area, and a mechanized "horse lava" - a regiment of light tanks in a motorized division and a corps motorcycle regiment, and its own infantry - four motorized rifle regiments capable of gaining a foothold in the conquered area and covering the advancing tank wedge from the flanks and rear. The mechanized corps also had its own means of air defense, communications, and intelligence. Even our own reconnaissance aviation - a corps air squadron, which was armed with 15 U-2 and R-5 aircraft (the U-2 corn, as you know, took off and landed in any forest clearing, thus radically solving the sacramental problem of "lack of communication"). After numerous changes in the staff strength, the armament of the mechanized corps was to include **1,031 tanks**, namely: **126 KB,**

420 T-34, 316 BT, 152 T-26 (including 108 flamethrower ones) and 17 T-38 / T40 amphibious machine-gun tankettes. Tanks were distributed

as follows: in a motorized division, the state should have had 258 light high-speed BT-7s and 17 amphibious tanks. A total of **275 tanks**. Each of the two tank divisions was supposed to have 63 heavy tanks KV, 210 medium T-34, 26 BT-7 and 76 T-26 (including 54 flamethrower). Total **375 tanks**. Another 6 BT-7 tanks were listed in the divisions of the corps. In addition, the mechanized corps was armed with such a type of armored vehicles (absent in the Wehrmacht) as wheeled cannon armored vehicles, a total of 152 BA-10 vehicles. They were armed with a 45-mm 20K tank gun in a standard tank turret, i.e., in terms of power and armor-piercing of their weapons, they surpassed the German tanks Pz-I, Pz-II, Pz-38 (t), Pz-III (the first series with 37-mm cannon), which by the summer of 1941 still accounted for 60% of the fleet of Wehrmacht tank groups. In total (including 116 light machine-gun BA-20s), there were 1,299 armored vehicles in the mechanized corps. If you line up all the armored vehicles of the mechanized corps in one line with a standard march interval of 15 m between vehicles, you get a "steel tape" of this 25 kilometers. The general distribution of armored vehicles of the mechanized corps is shown in the ta

	KB	T-34	BT-7	T-26	T-38 / T40	БА-10	БА-20
тд	63	210	26	76	0	56	39
тд	63	210	26	76	0	56	39
мд	0	0	258	0	17	18	33
корпусные полраздел.	0	0	6	0	0	22	5
ВСЕГО	126	420	316	152	17	152	116

The presence of 126 KB heavy tanks and 420 T-34 medium tanks in service with the mechanized corps means, among other things, 546 artillery barrels of 76.2 mm caliber, giving a total salvo weight of 3,385 kg. In addition to tank guns, the mechanized corps also included "normal" towed artillery located in the motorized rifle and artillery regiments of the corps divisions. It was distributed as follows:

	76,2-мм	122-мм	152-мм
ТД	4	12	12
ТД	4	12	12
МД	16	16	12
Всего	24	40	36

In general, the weight of the total volley of the mechanized corps (not even taking into account the five hundred 45-mm cannons in the turrets of light tanks and heavy armored vehicles) was almost 6 tons, i.e., four times higher than the corresponding indicator of the Wehrmacht infantry division. D. Pavlov could, with a sense of legitimate pride in the Red Army, report in December 1940 to the participants in the Conference of the Higher command staff:

"... Turning to the firepower of the tank corps, I allow myself to announce to you some results. In total, the corps has 1,466 guns of all calibers and mortars. As you can see, if this corps operates even on a 10-kilometer front (the average width of an infantry division's defense zone - M.S.), then it alone in terms of fire saturation can deliver a crushing blow ... Tank corps, supported by mass aviation, break into the enemy's defensive zone, break his anti-tank system, hit artillery along the way and go into the operational depth. Ahead of them, in accordance with the tactical and operational situation, paratroopers are thrown out, which in the future will be subordinated to these tank corps. Motorized infantry and rifle corps rush behind the tank corps with their tanks... With such actions, we believe that at least a couple of tank corps in the direction of the main attack will have to deliver a devastating blow within a couple of hours and cover the entire tactical depth of about 30-35 km. This requires massive use of tanks and aircraft; and this is possible with new types of tanks ..." (14) To fully equip nine mechanized corps and two separate tank divisions with tanks, the decision to deploy which was made in the summer of 1940, required "only" 10 thousand tanks. The Red Army "slipped" this mark back in 1937, and on September 15, 1940, the army had 17.7 thousand tanks in service (again, not counting

light tankettes T-27 and amphibious tanks). The problem was not in quantity, but in quality: mass production of new types of tanks was just beginning, and to fully equip all 20 tank divisions, **1,260 KB and 4,200 T-34s were required.** Of course, the T-28, T-26, BT tanks, with which the new mechanized corps were temporarily armed, were at least better than the German plywood models: they could not only train personnel, put together units and subunits, but, if necessary, fight. We repeat once again that these tanks could be considered "technically obsolete" only in comparison with the unique characteristics of the T-34 and KB, and not at all in comparison with enemy tanks. All of the above does not mean at all that there was no need to rush to re-equip with the latest, best tanks in the world. Therefore, the Soviet tank industry worked tirelessly. As of December 31, 1940, the first 196 KV and 97 T-34s had already entered the troops. The plan for the production of tanks in 1941 was constantly changing (naturally, upwards) and provided for the production of about

5.5 thousand tanks of new types. In fact, in 1941, **1,358 KB and 3,014 T-34s** were produced (1, p. 598, 38, p. 18). in a nightmare: one of the main manufacturers of tank armored hulls in the city of Mariupol was lost, two important enterprises (factory No. 183 and the only manufacturer of tank diesel engines in the country, factory No. 75) had to be transported under bombs from Kharkov to the Urals, two huge Leningrad factories (No. 185 named after Kirov and No. 174 named after Voroshilov) were in the blockade ring. There are no reasonable grounds to doubt that, under normal conditions, Soviet industry would be able to ensure by the end of 1941 that all nine mechanized corps were fully equipped and re-equipped with new tanks, each of which surpassed any of the four Wehrmacht tank groups in the number of tanks, and with an absolute superiority in TTX of Soviet armored vehicles. Huge "herds" of T-26 light tanks were also not forgotten, and

remelting in open-hearth furnaces did not threaten them.

According to the decisions made in the summer - autumn of 1940, tank brigades not only were not disbanded, but, on the contrary, it was decided to increase their number to 45. The "pathetic" 11.5 thousand light tanks needed to equip the tank brigades, for the most part, already existed. It was assumed that the light tank brigade would be operationally subordinate to the commander of the rifle corps and used by him both for direct support of the infantry on the battlefield in the offensive, and as a tool for delivering a powerful counterattack on the infantry and enemy tanks that had broken through into the tactical depth of the defense of the corps. Thus, the question over which military theorists of the whole world puzzled over for ten years was resolved in the Red Army in the most radical way. The French "smeared" three thousand of their light tanks over infantry units, leaving as a result without large strike formations. The Germans transferred all the tanks they had to 10 (then 20) tank divisions, while leaving one hundred divisions of their infantry without direct support tanks. The Soviet Union, officially maintaining strict neutrality in the outbreak of the European war, deployed almost fifty tank brigades to directly support the infantry and at the same time calmly and confidently created 9 most powerful tank "cleavers" capable of inflicting "deep cutting blows" on any enemy.

Two generations of Soviet (and now Russian) historians have waged and are waging a relentless struggle against the Soviet mechanized corps of 1941. It is understandable: all these years, official Soviet historical science, ignoring the obvious and indisputable fact of unprecedented mass desertion, mass surrender and defection to the side of the enemy, had to look for and find more and more "reasons for the defeat of the Red Army in the initial period of the war". The best tanks in the world (heavy KB, medium T-34, light BT-7M) were simply mixed with mud (not on the battlefield, of course, but on paper). It was "certainly established" that all these tanks were broken, hopelessly outdated, worn out, with an "insignificant balance" of 100–150 hours of motor life (which, however, means 2000–3000 km of run, sufficient to drive from Bialystok to Barcelona or Lisbon). The gears were too fragile

the fingers of the caterpillar tracks were too soft, the filters did not filter, the periscopes did not periscope ...

Fortunately, the struggle of historians was bloodless. Unfortunately, it had very concrete, tangible economic consequences. Two generations of Soviet generals were brought up and trained in military academies on the myth that the catastrophe of 1941 happened due to the technical backwardness of the Red Army. The Soviet generals did not want a repeat of the catastrophe and for half a century put pressure on the party elite, demanding to finally and irrevocably "re-equip" the Soviet army, so much so that friends were afraid. As a result, the Soviet Union collapsed and disappeared from the political map, armed with - among other things - 30,000 of the best tanks in the

world. New time - new songs. And the reader is now new, young and much more demanding. Therefore, the current successors of the glorious traditions of Soviet historiography are doing their job much better. Cleverer. They no longer "substitute" themselves with deliberately false fabrications about the "multiple numerical superiority of the Wehrmacht", but offer the educated reader purely scientific, with many "German" letters, explanations for the military disaster of 1941. The most elegant (in my purely subjective opinion) example of pseudoscientific littering of brains was offered to the public by A. Isaev. It is noteworthy that in this case my opinion completely coincided with the assessment of Mahmud Akhmetovich himself! Comrade M. A. Gareev recently publicly declared: *"If there are people like Alexei Isaev, our cause is not hopeless!"* They will, Mahmud Akhmetovich, they will. Do not doubt. Mala herba cito crescit ("weed grows quickly").

Comrade Isaev begins his constructions with an absolutely correct statements:

"... One should not exaggerate the role of technology ... The origins of bewilderment - "How could we lose with such good" shishi " (savage amulets. -MC) as KV and T-34?" - precisely in the pagan worship of the deities, which in recent history has transformed into a worship of technology. Any technique is just a soulless mechanism, which in itself does not guarantee success or failure.

Golden words Golden. Next is even better:

"The main mistake that is made is to compare only the tanks of the opposing sides. But the battles do not take place between crowds of tanks on a pre-selected field - in reality, organizational structures are fighting, complex mechanisms assembled from different branches of the military. The tanks in them are just one of the components of the "cubes". Significant, but not the only significant ... Providing a tank division with impenetrable tanks is, of course, good, but this is only half the battle. Tanks need to be refueled, repaired, supplied with ammunition, provided with reconnaissance, artillery and infantry support ... But for all this, approximately equal mobility of the "bricks" of the mechanized unit is needed, when tanks, and artillery, and infantry, fuel, ammunition for them move at a comparable speed, ensuring independent actions in the depths of the enemy's defense ... " (33)

How can you disagree with this? It is impossible to disagree with this. Fascinated by such a serious conversation (and indeed outlandish against the background of the general cave level of the "traditional" Russian historiography of the war), the reader does not notice how they begin to lightly push him off the right path into a trap prepared in advance:

"You can build a barn out of good brick or, on the contrary, to create a masterpiece of architecture from mediocre building materials. Stop - here is already a clear overexposure. From bad materials (for example, from a million volumes of works by Gareev and Isaev), you cannot build a masterpiece of architecture - it will rot from snow with rain and collapse. It is obvious. Less obvious, but very important for further presentation, is the understanding of the simple fact that different "bricks" imply a different construction of the building (a domed vault is made of bricks, a gable roof is made of a wooden bar, a flat ceiling is made of a reinforced concrete panel). But the thesis about the possibility of creating masterpieces from mediocre building materials is very necessary for Mr. Isaev - and here's why:

In the mid-1930s, a fundamentally new organizational and staffing mechanism for the use of tanks was developed in Germany, which became a kind of Wehrmacht's "sword-hoarder" in the campaigns of 1939-1942. The first step towards this "treasure sword" was taken on October 12, 1934, when the development of the scheme was completed in Germany

*organization of the first tank division. On January 18, 1935, the inspector of motorized troops, General Lutz, issued an order to form three tank divisions. This day can be conditionally considered the date of birth of the new mechanism of warfare. They were supposed to be equipped with a pathetic Pz-1 with two machine guns, but a structure appeared that was capable of something more than just breaking into enemy defenses. Instead of Pz-I, **there could have been at least cars sewn up with plywood** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) for tanks. To produce tanks and fill the form with the appropriate content was already a matter of technique and time ... " (67)*

Who would argue - the day when an unknown ancient Chinese launched the first powder rocket into the ancient Chinese sky can be considered the birthday of astronautics. After that, a manned flight to Mars became just a "matter of technology and time." But, apparently, Mr. Isaev invites us to argue about who came closer to a manned flight to Mars: America, which has already successfully sent its astronauts to the Moon, Russia, which mass-produces powerful (though still insufficient for a Martian expedition) rocket carriers, or, say, Burma, where "technique and time" have not yet advanced beyond festive firecrackers? In 1935, another bureaucratic piece of paper was born in Germany, on which squares with arrows were drawn, indicating the regiments and battalions of a non-existent tank division, which was to be armed with plywood models of tanks. The combat training tankettes Pz-I, as the practical experience of the war in Spain convincingly showed, not only were not capable of "*something more than just breaking the enemy's defenses*", but were generally not suitable for use as a linear tank. In the Soviet Union at that time there were already 3.5 thousand tanks with cannon weapons, and by the end of 1935, 18 tank brigades were formed in the Red Army. What is the great advantage of a piece of paper born in Germany, by virtue of which it weighs more than 3,500 tanks? And here's what: "*The main thing - the innovative idea of using tank troops - was already available ... What was the*

essence of the innovation? The creation of an organizational structure, including tanks, motorized infantry, artillery, engineering units and communications units, made it possible not to

only to break through the enemy's defenses, but also to develop it in depth, breaking away from the bulk of its troops for tens of kilometers. The tank unit became largely autonomous and self-sufficient ... Tonki was a strategic means of combat. Now there is an opportunity to put into practice ^{became} the "philosopher's stone" of military art, to conduct a lightning war against a strong enemy ... " (67)

As the classic said: "Ostap carried." Precisely because the Red Army had not only an "innovative idea", but also real-life tank units and formations, the idea was tested in practice. A valuable negative result was obtained: such tank formations on such a material basis (light tanks with anti-ballistic armor and small-caliber weapons) cannot be either autonomous or self-sufficient. It would seem that exactly the same conclusion should have been made in relation to the Wehrmacht tank division. Without tanks with normal artillery armament and anti-shell armor, without the proper number of caterpillar tractors for artillery and all-terrain transporters for soldiers and ammunition, the German "sword-hoarder" would have been even more helpless in the depths of the defense of a stubbornly defending enemy than Soviet tank **brigades**. To express the "innovative idea" that all the "bricks" of the impact connection should have equal mechanized mobility is good. But not enough. We still need to implement this idea logistically. Even the Soviet Union could not do this in full by 1941. Moreover, Hitler's Germany did not have time to do this either, for which history But Mr. Isaev gave a negligible amount of time (from 1935 to 1941). declared technology a pagan idol ("shishi"), as it turns out, only in order to create a new idol out of organizational structures! The 48-ton KB tank was declared a miserable savage amulet, but a paper sheet with a diagram of the organizational structure of a German tank division was declared a "philosopher's stone" and a "treasure sword". A dismissive remark - *"providing a tank division with impenetrable tanks, of course, is good, but this is only half the battle"* - turned out to be just a preparatory step to declaring the absence of "impenetrable tanks" in the Wehrmacht as the crowning achievement.

And finally, that longed-for final point appears, to which the reader was so intricately led: *"In the Kiev OVO there are*

6 formations that can be used as independent ones ... In the Odessa VO - three. In total, 6 tank and 3 motorized divisions ... If we compare not the gross number of tanks of the opposing sides, but organizational structures, then the number of independent mechanized formations of the Kiev OVO, Odessa VO and the 1st tank group of the Wehrmacht are quite commensurate with each other. The rest of the tank fleet of the Soviet side is united in organizational structures that, due to the lack of transport, do not have the necessary mobility for waging a mobile war. (33, p. 75)

5,826 Soviet tanks (including 818 KB and T-34) = 728 German (of which 373 are light tanks and tankettes).

20 armored + 11 motorized divisions of the Red Army = 5 armored + 3 motorized German divisions. Q.E.D. However, on page

663, at the end of his book, Mr. Isaev explains that there were not even six tank divisions in the Red Army: *"If you call a spade a spade, then the Soviet side did not have an*

*effective organizational structure like "tank division" . The presence of organizational structures with the name "tank division" should not be misleading - they were unable to solve the problems of an independent tank formation ... These divisions were overloaded with **tanks** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) and underloaded with motorized infantry and artillery. (33. p. 663)* The enchanting phrase about "the overload of tank divisions with tanks" might seem like a typo (or an unfortunate expression I deliberately snatched from the text of Isaev's

book), if this idea had not been persistently pursued on dozens of pages. The most powerful tank forces of the world are declared non-existent only on the grounds that the structure (the ratio of the number of tank, artillery, infantry units) of the tank division of the Red Army differed from the corresponding structure of the German tank division, and the latter is declared the highest ideal, a kind of "golden section" that allows you to work miracles :

"... The Germans came to their "golden section" of the organization of tank troops: for 2-3 tank battalions in the Wehrmacht tank division there were 4 (or 5, if you count with a motorcycle) motorized infantry battalion ... It was this organization of tank troops that allowed the Germans (emphasized by me . — M.S.) to reach the walls of Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev..." (33, p. 66)

Yes, Comrade Gareev's admiration can be understood - he and his colleagues have not thought of this for half a century ... The question of why in 1941 the Red Army mechanized corps did not reach Berlin, Prague and Budapest, Mr. Isaev does not even explicitly discuss, but makes it clear: we did not have a "golden section". And without a "section" and a "hoarder" a lot you won't win:

"... With the "golden section" the affairs of the Soviet tank division were frankly bad. If we compare the tank division of the Soviet mechanized corps and the tank division of the Wehrmacht, we can see that, for example, there are no anti-tank guns in the Soviet division at all, the number of light howitzers in the German division is twice as large, there are five times more regimental guns in the German tank division, medium-caliber mortars - almost one and a half times. But, of course, the difference in the number of motorized infantry in comparison with the number of tanks was the most noticeable ... For 375 tanks of the Soviet tank division there were about 3 thousand people of motorized infantry, and for 150-200 tanks of the Wehrmacht tank division there were 6 thousand people of motorized infantry ... Therefore, the German tank it was easier for the division to both attack and defend. She had more infantry moving with the division and able to occupy and hold the area. (33, p. 72) This whole discussion could be "closed" with one simple reminder that the Red Army also had a division of the "golden section"

itself. And not one, but thirty-one. Of course, we are talking about a motorized division of the staff of July 1940. Everything in it is structurally exactly the same as in a Wehrmacht tank division: one tank, two motorized rifle and artillery regiments. For 3 tank battalions, 6 motorized infantry battalions. And there is a separate anti-tank division in it (36 "forty-five"). And the composition of the weapons of the anti-tank artillery regiment is quite comparable. One problem - even the Soviet motorized (not to mention the tank) division

nominally "overloaded" with tanks: 258 high-speed BT-7 tanks for 5,904 people in two motorized rifle regiments. But if, from the very beginning, fifty "extra" tanks are left on the sidelines, then a real "treasure sword" will turn out. With this, even to Moscow, even to Berlin. It will allow

you to reach ... In fact, not only motorized, but also tank divisions of the Red Army by June 22, 1941 were not, to our great regret, "overloaded" with tanks. Looking ahead somewhat in the presentation of historical events, we note that in the spring of 41, not 9, but 29 mechanized corps were deployed, which led to a huge (huge relative to the staffing table, and not the size of the enemy!) shortage of tanks. Specifically, in the 20 mechanized corps (not counting the emerging 17 MK and 20 MK of the Western Front), which took part in the hostilities of the first weeks of the war, there were about 12.5 thousand tanks, i.e. an average of 208 tanks per one (tank or motorized) division. It was decided to temporarily equip the so-called "horseless" (not receiving tanks) tank regiments with cannons (24 "divisions" 76-mm + 18 anti-tank 45-mm per regiment) on automobile (GAZ-AA and ZIS-5/6 trucks) traction . As a result, the actual composition of most of the Soviet tank divisions was overloaded with artillery and underloaded with tanks. In the best "gold-cut" form ...

If Mr. Isaev himself believed in what he writes (and did not fool gullible readers with the worst recipes for psychological warfare), then he would start with the main question - is the organizational structure factor so significant that it does not correspond to some arbitrary standard (" golden section") Panzer divisions lose their combat capability to zero? This question would immediately lead him to the following: "What makes an infantry battalion a motorized infantry battalion of a tank division? *The "organization scheme"* approved by a certain general , or, first of all, and mainly, **the real availability of vehicles that** allow you to move **at the same speed and the same maneuverability** as tanks? Anything can be included in a tank division. On paper. It is no secret that on the eve of June 22, 1941, the German command included infantry divisions in the Wehrmacht tank groups. Not motorized infantry, but the most ordinary infantry divisions. With horse-drawn artillery and soldiers on two legs each. The miracle, however, did not happen, and after a few days

the infantry, hopelessly lagging behind, did not even hear the roar of the cannonade of the tank divisions that had gone a hundred kilometers ahead.

Much more reasonable was the creation of the so-called "horse-mechanized groups" adopted in the Red Army (both in theory and in practice). Of course, we are not talking about attacking a fortified enemy line with horse-drawn lava along with tanks. The horse in the cavalry divisions of the Second World War mainly served as a vehicle that increased the mobility of the unit (in comparison with conventional infantry) many times over. The cavalry went directly into battle, as a rule, on foot. Among the forests and swamps of Belarus and north-west Russia, the Soviet cavalry was at least as mobile as the German motorized infantry. Moving at a pace of 50-60 km per day (which is quite affordable for cavalry), the cavalry divisions could keep up with the tanks even in the conditions of the most successful, rapid offensive. Of course, no horse can compete with the motor in the ability to move continuously, for many hours and for many days. The exceptional vulnerability of cavalry to air strikes should also be taken into account. Of course, the creation of cavalry-mechanized groups was a forced palliative, but for the time when neither tracked armored personnel carriers, nor even hundreds of thousands of three-axle American "Studebakers" with their fantastic maneuverability and reliability were yet in the Red Army, the unification of tank and cavalry divisions into temporary operational groups was an adequate and quite effective solution. By the way, even in the liberation of Prague in May 1945, nine (!) Soviet cavalry divisions took part ... The story of the inclusion of the 41st infantry divisions in the Wehrmacht tank groups in June is an extreme example of bureaucratic fetishism. But even in the motorized infantry regiments of the tank and motorized divisions of the Wehrmacht, the problem of ensuring at least comparable to tanks patency was not solved. The bulk of this infantry did not move at all on armored personnel carriers (as they showed in the old Soviet "movie about the war"), but on assorted trophy trucks and buses. The

chief of the general staff of the Wehrmacht, Halder, notes in his famous diary (entry dated 22

May 1941) that the 17th TD (Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group) had 240 different types of vehicles. The 17th Panzer Division was to launch an offensive on the right flank of Army Group Center, among the swamps of the Belarusian Polesie. In such terrain, a captured Belgian bus or a French bread van quickly turned from a vehicle into a pushing item. The 3rd Panzer Group in the first days of the war moved along the forest roads of southern Lithuania. There seems to be sand, not swamps. Nevertheless, the group commander G. Goth describes the events of the second day of the war

So:

"The cars got stuck all the time and stopped the entire convoy following them, since the possibility of a detour on the forest roads was completely excluded ... The infantrymen and artillerymen were forced to pull out the stuck cars all the time ... it was a real torment for the command to see how his "mobile" troops were suffocating ... In noon on June 23, the tank regiment of the 1st

TD entered the Lida road - Vilnius, the division's wheeled vehicles were left far behind ... " (13)

On July 20, 1941, after a warm summer rain, three months before the onset of a real autumn thaw, F. Halder writes in his diary: "... the 11th Panzer Division is moving

towards Uman in three mobile echelons: 1) tracked vehicles with infantry planted on them ; 2) horse-drawn carts with infantry that follow tracked vehicles; 3) wheeled vehicles that cannot move on broken and muddy roads and therefore are forced

stay put..."

August 3rd entry : *"Lousy weather! The battles that initially promised success in the encirclement of the enemy grouping (in the Uman region. - M.S.) are delayed by showers, which led to a decrease in the mobility of motorized formations ... "*

To really ensure the interaction of tanks and motorized infantry, 20 German tank divisions of 1941, along with the most "correct" organizational structure, needed about 10 thousand more half-tracked armored personnel carriers "Khanomag" (Sd.Kfz. 251). Such a quantity was not produced even during the five years of the war (the actual output at the end of 1943 amounted to 6.5 thousand, including

in 1939–1940 - only 569 units). (80, p. 262) In fact, by the beginning of the invasion of the USSR, not every Wehrmacht tank division had at least **one motorized infantry company** equipped with a regular number (26 units) of armored personnel carriers. In parentheses, we note that the root "armor" in the word "armored personnel carrier" in relation to Sd.Kfz. 251 is rather misleading. In order to be convinced of this, it is enough to look at any front-line photograph of the Khanomag - not a colorful illustration in a magazine, but a photograph. Looking carefully at the photo, we will see the waist belts of the soldiers sitting in this armored personnel carrier. And this is not because 2-meter giants served in the Wehrmacht, but because the sides of the Khanomag were very low and they covered only the lower part of the German motorized infantry from enemy fire. And they were low because the platform was high, and he inherited the high platform from the Sd.Kfz-II half-track artillery tractor, on the chassis of which he was made ... Of course, go by bus (even

if he gets stuck on country roads after the first rain) is still much faster and more convenient than walking. And under certain conditions - the main of which is the lack of organized enemy resistance - motorized infantry units can not break away from the tanks, moving along the roads in the most ordinary trucks. True, another question arises here: in such a situation, do tank formations need a swift raid on the rear of a panic-stricken enemy to "occupy and hold the terrain"? Or is it more important to keep the initiative, bridges, crossings, railway junctions, passing the infantry following in the footsteps of the tanks the duty to collect trophies and drive the prisoners into march columns? *"Only pursuit can consolidate the successes achieved in previous battles. Therefore, each tank commander must strive to continue the offensive*

with all combat-ready vehicles and conduct it as long as there is enough fuel ... Only in this way can subsequent battles be facilitated or completely avoided ... Each quarter of an hour won is valuable and can have a decisive impact on military operations "- so writes G. Guderian, an outstanding theoretician of tank warfare, repeatedly

who tested the correctness of his theories in practice (16) G. Goth completely agrees with him: *"Success achieved thanks to the bold and swift actions of tank formations must be used in order to retain the operational initiative (and not the terrain. - M.S. .). Restricting the mobility of tank formations, which is their best defense, keeping them in one place for a long time contradicts the very nature and purpose of this type of troops ..."* (13) Most likely, the mythical "overload" of Soviet tank divisions with tanks, as well as "congestion" by the infantry of the German tank divisions, and the complete absence of tanks in the motorized

divisions of the Wehrmacht **was neither an advantage nor a disadvantage**. These are their **features**, which should have been taken into account in the development (and most importantly, in the implementation) of the tactics of using these formations in combat and in operations. That's all. There are no reasonable grounds (except for a great and disinterested desire to come up with something new to replace the hackneyed conjectures about "hopelessly outdated Soviet tanks") for declaring non-existent mechanized (tank) formations on the grounds that their organizational structure does not correspond to some "cross-section" sucked from the finger. Moving from abstract schemes and reasoning to the tragic reality of June 1941, we are forced to state **the most important fact**: not a single tank division, not a single mechanized corps of the Red Army had to break away from their own "slow-moving" infantry during the rapid offensive. Not once and not once.

At the same time, there were a lot of infantry, often tank units fought in a continuous "encirclement" of randomly retreating infantry. No interaction - with rare happy exceptions - was established, but "organization schemes" and the notorious "golden sections" to all this

had no relation.

"... in connection with the withdrawal of the rifle units of the 4th SC, the entire burden of hostilities fell on the units of the 11th MK, both to cover the withdrawal of parts of the rifle corps, and to delay the advance of the Germans ..."

... The 795th rifle regiment of the 228th rifle division, having broken away from the division, retreated in disorder in an easterly direction. The 228th Rifle Division and its 485th Howitzer Artillery Regiment left the front without warning and retreated in disarray, completely exposing our left flank. In such a situation, the 43rd Panzer Division entered the battle without sufficient reconnaissance and coordination of interaction with artillery and neighbors in the

future, 12 MK conducted frequent counterattacks dozens of times and basically bore the brunt of covering the troops of the 8th Army during its continuous depart to the north. The corps, sacrificing itself, saved the infantry from complete destruction and defeat. The task was completed well, but he himself was bled and requires immediate withdrawal to the

rear and resupplying at 10 o'clock the 32nd Panzer Division received an order from the commander of the 4th Mechanized Corps, on which the division was to develop the strike of the 6th Rifle Corps in its offensive, but the headquarters of the 6th Rifle Corps set the tank division an independent task - to attack in the direction of a heavily fortified anti-tank area with a river and swampy terrain, without supporting the actions of the division with either infantry or artillery ...

... a group of tanks under Captain Karpov at 20:00 attacked the enemy in the direction of Olshanka, but, not supported by infantry, retreated at 23:00. Over the next day, the group fought an unbearable battle in the same area, and as a result of the flight from the front of the 32nd motorized rifle regiment, it was destroyed and left on the battlefield, with the exception

of one tank throughout the entire duration of the hostilities, the provision of rifle units was absolutely not organized, and therefore, in order to keep the infantry at least for the first period of the battle, the tank commanders were obliged to provide them with food and ammunition from their own means. All of the above reasons made the infantry unstable, and at the slightest onslaught of the enemy, as a rule, they retreated in a panic, leaving only tanks on the battlefield ... "

The last of the above excerpts from the combat reports of the commanders of tank formations of the Red Army deserves special attention (these are lines from the report of the commander of the 1st Panzer Division, hero of the Soviet Union, participant in the war in Spain and

Finland, General V.I. Baranov). (81) It turns out that for a 100% "golden section" in the organizational structures of the Red Army of the summer of 1941, it was important to note the place of the kitchen and stocks of barley porridge, without which it was not possible to "keep *the infantry at least for the first period of the battle*" ...

Mr. Isaev's second "accusation" against the structure of the Soviet tank divisions is the "underload" of their artillery (including the complete absence of anti-tank artillery). This is already serious, and such a drawback (if only it really exists!) You cannot write off the category of "features". The tactics of using tank formations cannot be based on the psychological effect of the appearance of a roaring steel avalanche alone. Serious plans for the Great War are not developed in the hope of "taking on a show off." And Comrade Stalin understood this very well. As early as April 17, 1940, he told his military leaders: "*Focus is a good thing - cunning, ingenuity and so on. But it is impossible to live on the focus. Once he deceived - he went to the rear, the second time he deceived, and the third time you will not deceive. The army cannot win back on some tricks ...*". (68) The absolute truth is that the army (including tank formations) must be ready not only to drive the fugitives, but also to fight the stubbornly defending enemy. And for this, courage alone is not enough; overwhelming firepower is also needed. As the Charter says: "*Combat is to a large extent a fire contest between the opposing sides*" (PU-39, Art. 19). How, then, does Mr. Isaev prove that the Soviet tank divisions are "underloaded" with

artillery? With the dexterity of a "thimblemaker", he replaces the really important category "division firepower" with the notion of "number of towed artillery barrels" that is by no means identical to it ("the number of *light howitzers in a German division is twice as much, regimental guns in a German tank division are five times more, mortars of medium caliber - almost one and a half times*"). But we will not, of course, succumb to such a primitive swindle and once again use a pencil and a working calculator:

Калибр орудия, мм	танковые 37	танковые 45/50	танковые 76/75	Полевые 76/75	Полевые 122/105	Гаубицы 152/150
советская тд	0	104	273	4	12	12
немецкая тд	61	42	26	20	24	16

Note: the number of tank guns of various calibers for the "German TD" is given as an average for 17 Wehrmacht tank divisions on the Eastern Front. June 12, 1941

So what do we see? The firepower of a Soviet tank division is enormous, and it is **concentrated in the armament of the tanks themselves**. And this means that most of the artillery barrels of the Soviet tank division are covered with armor, move on an all-terrain tracked chassis of the tank and therefore have the ability to shoot enemy firing points with direct fire, from extremely close range, i.e. with maximum efficiency. To say that *"there are five times more regimental guns in a German tank division"* is simply ridiculous, given that exactly the same "three-inch guns", but in the amount of 273 units, are in the armored towers of the KB and T-34 tanks. For the same reason - the presence of 273 tank guns of 76 mm caliber, capable (we repeat this again) of penetrating the frontal armor of any German tank at a kilometer range - there was no place for an anti-tank division in the composition of the Soviet tank division. The Soviet tank division is "underloaded" with small-caliber anti-tank guns for the same reason that every healthy person is "underloaded" with a crutch and a wooden prosthesis.

Buildings of different designs are built from different materials. In the summer of 1941, the only type of tank in the Wehrmacht with a "three-inch" gun was still the Pz-IV. These "heavy" tanks were distributed in the amount of 10 units for each tank battalion, respectively 20 or 30 units per tank division. In total, the 17 tank divisions with which the Wehrmacht began the "eastern campaign" on June 22, 1941 were:

- 439 Pz-IV tanks, armed with a 75-mm cannon; - 707 Pz-III tanks with a 50-mm cannon and - 1,039 tanks with a 37-mm almost useless for fighting infantry cannon (Pz-III of the early series and Czech Pz-38 (t)).

Another 1,081 tanks of the invading army were armed with a 20 mm cannon or machine guns alone. This is how "the whole of Europe worked for Hitler ...". It is not surprising that in an attempt to somehow compensate for the obvious weakness of the armament of German tanks, two-thirds of which were armed with small-caliber guns (37-mm or even 20-mm) in the summer of 41, the Wehrmacht command included a full-fledged artillery regiment in the tank division, the number of guns in which was close to the size of the artillery regiment of an infantry division (which, we recall, had 36 105 mm howitzers and 18 artillery systems of 150 mm caliber). But even this attempt to match the firepower of a Red Army tank division, armed with a much larger number of incomparably better tanks, proved to be untenable. Which is clearly seen from the table below of the weight of the total volley:

пушки (гаубицы)	танковые 37-мм	танковые 45/50-мм	танковые 76/75-мм	Итого танковые	полевые 76/75-мм	гаубицы 122/105	гаубицы 152/150	ВСЕГО
советская тд	0	208	1 693	1 901	25	260	480	2 670
немецкая тд	44	76	151	271	124	360	688	1 443

Allegedly "underloaded with artillery", **the Soviet tank division in its firepower is almost twice as superior as the German tank division**, and 71% of the total salvo of the Soviet division falls, in modern terms, on "high-precision weapons" (tank guns firing direct fire, the gunner of which is reliably covered steel armor). In terms of the weight of the total volley of tank guns, the Soviet tank division exceeds the German one by seven times. And this is already such a quantity that could create a new quality. Here is how D. Pavlov, the "chief tanker" of the Red Army (head of the Main Armored Directorate) reported on this at the December (1940) Meeting of the highest command staff: "... If 120 76-mm shells or 50 shells of a 122-mm howitzer, then I ask

you to calculate how many shots a tank will need in order to destroy one machine-gun nest? Either none, or from a distance of 1-1.5 km 2-3 shells. As a rule, a 122-mm howitzer is used to destroy anti-tank guns. Need 70-90

shells. I ask you: how many projectiles does a heavy tank need to suppress one anti-tank gun? Either nothing, or one shot... I argue that the presence of a large number of heavy tanks will greatly help the artillery in its work and reduce the consumption of shells..." (14) The firepower figures given

above refer to a fully manned tank division. But at the beginning of the war there were no such divisions. None. The decision taken in February-March 1941 to deploy 29 mechanized corps led to the formation of dozens of new tank and motorized divisions, the total number of which by the beginning of the war was 92 unthinkable for any country in the world (61 tank and 31 motorized). The tanks in service with the Red Army were "smeared" over dozens of divisions, as a result of which most of the divisions and mechanized corps were "underloaded" with tanks, especially new types (KV, T-34), armed with a 76-mm gun. As a result, the real firepower of the division turned out to be less than the calculated one. Let's not, however, lose sight of (and the Soviet "historians" were very inclined to do so) that it was not necessary to fight with the clerical "percentage of the staff", but with the enemy. Accordingly, the armament capacity of Soviet mechanized formations should be compared with similar characteristics of Wehrmacht tank formations, and not at all with the staffing table written in high headquarters. A correct comparison is not easy enough: what to compare with what? If in the summer of 1941 17 Wehrmacht tank divisions and 20 Red Army mechanized corps met on

the Eastern Front, if in fact the Wehrmacht tank division was assigned the same tasks that the mechanized corps was instructed to solve on the other side of the front, then wouldn't it be appropriate to compare the quantitative indicators of these particular formations? The result of comparing the indicators of a Wehrmacht fire tank division with a mechanized corps of the Red Army is obvious. Of course, the body will be more powerful - in all respects. Let's not even bore the reader with such obvious arithmetic. The average mechanized corps (out of those 20 that took part in the hostilities of the first weeks of the war) included 100 tanks armed with a 76-mm cannon (T-28, T-34, KV, T-35), and about 500

light tanks armed with a 45 mm cannon. The composition of artillery weapons on average was at least half of the standard, i.e., about 20 howitzers of 122 mm caliber and 18 howitzers of 152 mm caliber per mechanized corps. Armed in this way, the mechanized corps in terms of the number of tanks - three times, and in terms of the total weight of an artillery salvo - was twice the size of the German tank division. And in terms of the average number of personnel (25.5 thousand people as of June 1, 1941), an understaffed mechanized corps is twice as large as a fully equipped Wehrmacht tank division.

And yet, the most demanding reader will say, "no one branch of the armed forces replaces the other." There is no need to argue with this. Unfortunately, one has to argue, proving the obvious fact that the absence of a full-fledged howitzer regiment in the structure of a Soviet tank division does not yet mean the absence of such a regiment on the battlefield. In order for a heavy howitzer regiment to support the offensive of a tank division with its fire, it is not at all necessary to forever include it in the "organizational structure", which Mr. Isaev proposes to turn into an object of pagan worship. It is enough that this regiment exists in reality and has the means of mechanized traction, allowing it to move after the tanks.

There were separate heavy artillery regiments (corps and RGK regiments) in the Red Army. Caterpillar tractors (or, in the worst case, tractors), even before the start of open mobilization, there were already more than guns. Most of the total number of 94 corps regiments and 74 regiments of the RGK by June 41 was already in the western border districts. In the Western and Kiev districts, by the beginning of the war, the number of corps regiments (KAP), not even counting the artillery regiments of the RGK, exceeded the total number of corps, so that in order to transfer a heavy howitzer regiment to operational subordination to the commander of a mechanized corps, it was not at all necessary to "disarm" the neighboring rifle frame.

	стрелковые корпуса	механизир. корпуса	КАП	Артиллерия РКК
Прибалтийский ОВО	семь	два	8	3
Западный ОВО	восемь	четыре	15	10
Киевский ОВО	одиннадцать	восемь	22	13
Одесский ВО	три	два	4	2

The use of these artillery regiments in cooperation with tank (mechanized) formations was quite normal, a standard scheme of interaction. Artillery regiments and separate divisions of the RGK were transferred to the operational subordination of the commanders of the fronts and armies precisely for this purpose, in order to support the offensive of their troops in the direction of the main attack with a powerful fire tornado. As for the composition, structure and armament of the corps artillery regiments and regiments of the RGC, they were very different. At a minimum, these regiments could be armed with 152-mm howitzers. In this case, there were 48 guns in the four divisions of the artillery regiment, and in terms of the weight of the total salvo (1,920 kg), one such regiment already significantly exceeded the German tank division. Two corps regiments (for example, given in the first days of the war to the 4th mechanized corps 441st and 445th, armed with the latest 152-mm ML-20 howitzer guns) could and should have wiped out all

life in the mechanized corps breakthrough zone. The available artillery of the first echelon of the troops of the Southwestern Front was by no means exhausted by 152-mm howitzers of corps artillery regiments. So, in the city of Dubno (namely, this ancient city, near the walls of which Taras Bulba killed his own son, was to become the epicenter of a grandiose tank battle in Western Ukraine), the 330th howitzer regiment of the RGK was stationed. The regiment was armed with 203-mm howitzers, and on the eve of the war, they additionally received 24 203-mm howitzers. (90) In general, the troops of the Kyiv OVO (South-Western Front) by the beginning of June 1941 had 192 howitzers of this caliber. This artillery system fired a 100-kg projectile (which corresponds to the weight of the most massive high-explosive bomb) at a distance of 18 km. 20 volleys of the 330th GAP corresponded to a massive raid by a bomber regiment. The lack of mechanical traction equipment had no practical significance for the 330th GAP, since the enemy tank (and then infantry) divisions themselves came to the city of Dubno. And if, as Mr. Isaev asserts without a shadow of embarrassment, *“despite the importance of the qualities of tanks (and indeed, why attach great importance to some difference in the “quality” of German tankettes and Soviet KVs?), the course of the battle of mechanized formations*

the outcome of the battle near Dubno would have been a foregone conclusion - the 330th GAP alone was superior in firepower to two Wehrmacht tank divisions.

In reality, the 11th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht occupied Dubno on June 25, 1941, without even noticing the existence of the 330th howitzer artillery regiment of the RGK. Fifty of the most powerful howitzers did not take any part in further battles in the vicinity of Dubno, which were led by units of the 43rd, 12th and 34th tank divisions of the Red Army. Why? Did the "golden ratio" of the organizational structures not interfere enough? Lack of tractors? The suddenness of a treacherous attack?

There are still cases of panic, cowardice, disorganization and desertion. These shameful phenomena are taking place in a number of parts of the front. The mass of fighters and commanders in groups and singly, with and without weapons, continue to move along the roads to the rear and sow panic. So, the commander of the 330th heavy artillery regiment of the RGK and the battalion commissar, during a German air raid on Dubno and an imaginary movement of enemy tanks, ordered to abandon the materiel, property and move out of the city. Already on the way, the commanders offered to return and pick up materiel and ammunition. Before reaching 1.5 km to the abandoned property, the regiment commander mistook the explosions of shells of our anti-aircraft artillery for paratroopers (these "paratroopers" are still filled with domestic military-historical literature. - M.S.) and ordered to return back ... " (92) Another sad reality of June 41st was the situation when not heavy artillery regiments were transferred to the operational subordination of tank commanders, but, on the contrary, mechanized corps were torn

apart by no units, transferring their divisions to the subordination of the commanders of rifle corps. It is unlikely that such "operational art" was the best way to use mechanized formations, but the mythical problem of the "underload" of Soviet tank formations with infantry and artillery was solved in the most radical way. For example, 100 km north of Dubno, in the Vladimir Volynsky-Rovno strip, the 22nd mechanized corps was deployed. It consisted of two tank divisions: the 19th and 41st. The 19th TD is its first and actually last battle (after which the number remained from the division, the wounded commander, 4 tanks and two motorized infantry battalions)

spent June 24 near the village of Voinitsa (on the highway VI. - Volynsky - Lutsk) as part of the operational group of the 27th rifle corps. The corps was given two artillery regiments: the 21st (48 ML-20 howitzer guns of 152 mm caliber and 20 long-range guns of 122 mm caliber) and the 460th corps artillery regiment, which theoretically should have provided overwhelming fire superiority over the enemy (14th tank division of the Wehrmacht). Moreover, on the same highway and in the same area, the full-fledged 1st anti-tank artillery brigade of the RGK (120 guns of 76 mm and 85 mm caliber) fought with German tanks. In parentheses, we note that after this and many, many subsequent battles, by September 6, 1941, the irretrievable losses of the 14th Panzer Division of the Wehrmacht amounted to 27 tanks (6 Pz-IV, 17 Pz-III and 4 Pz-II), in addition, 18 tanks

were temporarily out of order. (10, p. 206) Initially, the 41st Panzer Division of the 22nd Mechanized Corps had an unusually large number of tanks (425 units), including 31 KV-2 tanks armed with a 152-mm howitzer (there was one, quite rare, modification of this heavy tank).

Taking into account 4 towed 152 mm howitzers (the division was understaffed to full strength) and 12 122 mm howitzers in an artillery regiment - and not even taking into account hundreds of 45 mm tank guns - by the weight of an artillery salvo (1,660 kg) 41- I, etc., outnumbered any German tank division. This division operated (more precisely, wandered through the swampy forests of Ukrainian Polissya), being transferred to the operational subordination of the 15th Rifle Corps, whose artillery (again, not counting one and a half hundred divisional guns of caliber from 45 mm to 107 mm) consisted of 60 howitzers of caliber 122 mm and 67 152 mm howitzers. A. Isaev accompanies these gigantic indicators of firepower with such a "scientific" comment: *"The 15th rifle corps had rather modest combat capabilities, corresponding to one reinforced German infantry division ..."* (33, p. 235). Such an assessment is consistent with the scientific school of Comrade Gareev, based on the use of broken adding machines, but a working calculator reports that in terms of firepower (the weight of the total artillery salvo is 4,580 kg), the 15th CK was 3.3 times superior to the Wehrmacht infantry division. What is a "reinforced division" - I don't presume to judge ...

This chapter was already finished when the following information caught my eye: "On November 23, at

the Russian State University for the Humanities, within the framework of the university project Higher School of Politics, a public lecture was held by the military historian, writer Alexei Isaev on the topic: "The political aspect in the falsifications of history." ... Using the example

of interpretations of the history of the Second World War, the lecturer spoke about the existing technologies of falsification and political reasons

this phenomenon..."

Well, we can only envy the students and teachers of the Russian State Humanitarian University: they got the opportunity to hear a story about the dirty craft of falsifying history, and most importantly, about the political reasons for this phenomenon, from the lips of one of the leading masters of this genre...

Chapter

5 MYSTERIOUS MP-41

Returning from the schemes of organizational structures to real historical events, we find that in the spring and summer of 1940, great changes took place in the personal composition of the top military leadership of the USSR. It would be more accurate to say that the large-scale "change of generations" that began in 1937 has ended. The former leaders who came to the fore during the years of the Civil War were either physically destroyed (Belov, Blucher, Dybenko, Oak, Yegorov, Primakov, Tukhachevsky, Uborevich, Fedko, Yakir), or pushed back to formally honorary, but secondary roles (Apanasenko, Budyonny, Voroshilov, Gorodovikov, Kulik, Tyulenev). May 8, 1940 Klim Voroshilov, "the first red officer", was removed from the post of People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR. S. K. Timoshenko, a commander with extensive combat experience, was appointed to the place that this political commissar of the Civil War had occupied for 15 years. During the First World War, Timoshenko was an ordinary machine gunner, in the Civil War he commanded cavalry divisions (6th, and then 4th), during a short war with Poland (September 1939) he was commander of the Ukrainian Front. January 7, 1940 Timoshenko was appointed commander of the North-Western Front, deployed on the Karelian Isthmus. Under his personal leadership, a grandiose one was carried out - both in terms of the number of troops involved (21 rifle divisions, 8 tank brigades, 13 artillery regiments of the RGK, 40 thousand vehicles, 7.1 thousand guns and mortars, 3 thousand tanks), and in terms of the number losses (40 thousand killed, 150 thousand wounded) - an operation to break through the Mannerheim Line. In August 1940, K. A. Meretskov became the new Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. A fairly young (43 years old) general of the army has already served as a military adviser to the chief of the General Staff of the Spanish Army, deputy chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, and commander of the Leningrad Military District. It was he who led the operational planning of the war with Finland and the preparation of the theater of operations, and with the start of the offensive he commanded the t

large 7th Army. On February 1, 1941, the leadership of the General Staff changed again - G.K. Zhukov became Chief of the General Staff, who already had a successful operation to defeat the Japanese troops in the Mongolian steppes near the Khalkhin Gol River.

10 days after his appointment to the post of Chief of the General Staff, Zhukov, together with Timoshenko, signs a document of exceptional importance and the highest category of secrecy: the mobilization plan of 1941 ("Scheme of the mobilization deployment of the Red Army"), briefly referred to as "MP-41" (the exact date of signing the document is unknown, it is usually dated as "no later than February 12, 1941"). In addition to the drafters of the document themselves, two more people should have seen it: Stalin and Molotov, whom the military at the end of the memorandum asked *"to approve the number of formations and the total strength of the Red Army deployed according to the 1941 mobilization plan."* (4, p. 651) On fifty pages, the new leaders of the military department summed up everything that, in their opinion, the Red Army needed so that it could actually become "the most attacking of all the attacking armies ever." In particular, the shock component - tank troops - was to increase THREE TIMES. According to the MP-41 plan, **30 (thirty) mechanized corps** were to be formed, that is, 60 tank and 30 motorized divisions. The number of armored vehicles and tracked tractors necessary for the deployment of the Red Army was determined by the following figures: - 3,907 heavy tanks (mainly KV and 56 five-tower T-35); - 12,843 medium

tanks (mainly T-34s and 411 three-tower T-28s); - 10,942 BT light tanks;

- 5,118 T-26 light tanks (including 3,546 flamethrower ones); - 4,069 T-37/38/40

amphibious tanks; a total

of **36,879 tanks**. - 6,373 medium armored vehicles (gun BA-10, BA-P); - 4,306 light armored vehicles (machine-

gun BA-20); a total of **10,679 armored vehicles**. - 2,693

Voroshilovets tractors; - 25,152 S-2 and Comintern tractors;

- 7,802 armored tractors PTO "Komsomolets"; -
- 55,200 STZ-5 tractors and tractors;
- a total of **90,847 trucks and**

tractors. It is unnecessary to compare IT in detail with the quantitative parameters of weapons of other armies of the world. In any country, the chief of the General Staff, who requested 37,000 tanks and 11,000 armored vehicles, would have been immediately released from his job and sent for treatment. The main potential adversary of the USSR, Nazi Germany (already at war with the British Empire and the most powerful industrial power in the world, the United States, standing behind it) in June 1941 had only 6.58 thousand tanks and self-propelled guns of all types (including 1,137 machine-gun wedges Pz-I). In total - that is, on all fronts (and not only on the Eastern Front), in the reserve, at repair bases, in educational institutions, in units newly formed in the rear, etc. Only in the autumn of 1944 did the number of tanks and self-propelled guns, which are in service with the Wehrmacht, exceeded the mark of 10 thousand units. For the entire time Hitler was in power, 4.3 thousand armored vehicles of all types were produced (the vast majority of which were armed with a conventional rifle-caliber machine gun, that is, they belonged, by the standards of the Red Army, to the category of "light"), including 1.5 thousand until the end of 1940. Half-track artillery tractors of all types - again, for the entire existence of the Nazi regime - 38.3 thousand were produced. Zhukov and Timoshenko wanted to simultaneously have 35.7 thousand specialized artillery tracked tractors and another 55 thousand light STZ-5 and tractors!

Let's interrupt for a while the tedious stream of numbers and ask the simplest and most significant question:

"Why?" Why, **for what tasks were such cyclopean armed forces created?** In the vastness of what countries and continents could thirty mechanized corps with a thousand tanks each be deployed to deliver "deep cutting strikes"? It was believed that in order to carry out a major front-line offensive operation, it was necessary to have 2–3–4 mechanized corps. According to the plan for the deployment of mechanized corps adopted in the summer of 40 (as already noted in the previous chapter), two mechanized corps were formed in the Western OVO, and three in Kiev. Understandable quantities, sufficient

for two major front-line operations. But why thirty mechanized corps? Did Zhukov and Timoshenko really plan to carry out 6-7 large-scale strategic operations at the same time? Of course, the title of "the most attacking of all the armies that have ever attacked" obliges, but one should also know the measure ...

The mobilization deployment plan is, of course, an important document, but even it, in fact, serves only as an addition to the operational plan that determines everything else. Let us explain this idea with a simple everyday example. Normal tourists first decide who goes where and for how many days. After that, and on the basis of this decision, a list of the required number of backpacks, skewers, tents, kayaks, etc. is compiled. MP-41 has been

declassified and published. As for the operational plans of the top military-political leadership of the USSR, we can only build more or less plausible guesses. We do not know where, when and why the Red Army was going to go. MP-41 can be compared to "the shadow of a flying giant bird." We have not seen (and most likely will never see) this bird, but by the size of the shadow we can judge the span of its wings. Turning from complex metaphors to simple and accessible facts, we should pay attention to two operational strategic games on cards held on January 2-11, 1941 under the general leadership of People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko and Chief of the General Staff Meretskov. The fronts of conditional opponents were commanded by G.K. Zhukov, D.G. Pavlov, F.I. Kuznetsov, at that time - the real commanders of the troops of the three most important border districts (Kyiv, Western and Baltic). In the first

game, the offensive operation of the "Eastern" was practiced on the territory of East Prussia and Poland, in the strip from Warsaw to Königsberg, in the second game, the offensive of the "Eastern" from the line of the Vistula and Dunvets rivers (southern Poland) to Krakow - Budapest - Timisoara. Combat operations on their own territory in order to repel aggression **were not of interest to the Soviet leadership, even as a topic for an operational game.** A detailed analysis of the January (1941) games is beyond the scope of our topic. We note only one, but a very remarkable moment: the course of the games was tied to the specific dates of August (however, it is not known what year), and not to the conditional "first day of the operation", "second da

What interests us in the January games is the composition of the groups of the opposing sides.

In the first game, the "eastern" had 9 tank and 4 motorized divisions (i.e., four mechanized corps and one separate tank division) and 15 tank brigades of direct infantry support. In total, the "Eastern" had **8,811 tanks**. The enemy ("western") had 3 tank divisions and 6 tank brigades in its grouping (a formation that actually did not exist in the Wehrmacht), which for some reason turned out to be armed with an incredibly large number of tanks - 3,512 (an average of 600 tanks per one "calculated tank division", i.e. three times the actual number of tanks in a Wehrmacht tank division). Having launched an offensive on August 5 from the line of the Neman River, the "Eastern" moved forward, but got stuck on the long-term fortifications of the "Western" and did not complete the task - by September 3 to reach the line of the Vistula River from Warsaw to the Baltic.

The offensive of the "Eastern" developed much more successfully in the second game. From August 12 to 20, they "encircled" and partially "destroyed" the main forces of the "Western", "South-Western" and "Southern" (it is easy to guess that they meant the troops of the German, Hungarian and Romanian armies). The "Eastern" occupied Katowice (Poland), Kosice (Slovakia) and developed a breakthrough to Budapest. The game was stopped much earlier than the planned end date of the operation (September 16), as the crushing success of the "Eastern" had already become quite obvious. This success was achieved by the "eastern" in the following grouping: 4 mechanized corps, 2 separate tank divisions, 12 tank brigades, 81 rifle and 6 cavalry divisions. The "Eastern" had **8,840 tanks**, which is quite consistent with the regular strength of these formations. The "enemy" troops included 100 infantry and 4 cavalry divisions, 5 tank divisions (which, by a strange coincidence, exactly corresponds to the real number of Wehrmacht tank divisions, which on June 22, 1941 were part of Army Group South), in which again, an incredible number of tanks were discovered - 3,311. (37)

Thus, the "Eastern" more or less successfully crushed the enemy on a "foreign land", having in its composition approximately 20-25 "estimated" tank and motorized divisions (taking 2

brigades per division). And this despite the fact that, according to the conditions of the game, the enemy tank fleet was overestimated several times. As you can see, the course and outcome of the January Games does not give any intelligible answer to the question of why it was necessary to urgently make a decision to deploy 30 mechanized corps consisting of 60 tank and 30 motorized divisions.

Even more indicative is the experience of a real war and real offensive operations of 1944-1945, during which the Red Army reached Krakow, Budapest, and Berlin. The number of tanks and self-propelled guns in service with the Red Army (including temporarily out of order vehicles!), As of January 1, 1943, 1944 and 1945, was 8,100, 5,800, 8,300, respectively. Five to six times less than the drafters **demand** . MP-41. At the final stage of the Great Patriotic War, tank armies became large tank formations similar to the mechanized corps of the 1940 model (tank and mechanized corps became analogues of the tank and motorized divisions of the 1940s and 1941s). The composition of the tank (guards tank) army of the 44th year included, as a rule, two tank (258 tanks and self-propelled guns each) and one mechanized (246 tanks and self-propelled guns) corps, separate artillery regiments and brigades, combat support units. Compared to the mechanized corps of 1940, there were slightly fewer tanks in the tank army (800 versus 1,031), personnel - one and a half times more, artillery and mortars - many times more. (38, p. 26) Fully equipped with tanks - even before the start of major strategic offensive operations - has never been. So, before the start of the Berlin operation, four tank armies (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Guards Tank Armies) included 709, 672, 572 and 395 tanks, respectively. Returning to the area of "combat operations" of the second strategic game of January 1941, we can note that the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive operation (July - August 1944) was launched by three tank armies (1st, 3rd, 4th) having 419, 490 and 464 tanks, respectively, i.e., about half of the regular strength. At the beginning of the Iasi-Chisinau operation (August 1944), the 6th Panzer Army had only 560 tanks. (38) Such tank armies (according to the actual number of tanks, **twice inferior to the mechanized corps of the 1941 model**) in January 1944

there were six in the entire Red Army. **Not 30, as asked by Zhukov and Timoshenko in February 1941, but only 6.**

Fortunately for historians, one of the main characters of this story left a memoir. And not just "memories", but "Memories and reflections". We open it and read: "... In 1940,

the formation of new mechanized corps, tank and mechanized divisions begins. 9 mechanized corps were created. In February 1941, the General Staff (that is, the author of the memoirs himself. - M.S.) developed an even broader plan for the creation of armored formations than was envisaged by government decisions in 1940. Considering the number of armored troops in the German army, the people's commissar and I asked to use the existing tank brigades and even cavalry formations when forming mechanized corps, as being closest to the tank troops in their "maneuvering spirit". JV Stalin, apparently, at that time did not yet have a definite opinion on this issue and hesitated. Time passed, and only in March 1941 was it decided to form the 20 mechanized corps that we requested. However, we did not calculate the objective possibilities of our tank industry ... " (15, p. 215)

And it's all. G.K. Zhukov did not share any other thoughts on the topic **of the reasons for the decision** to deploy thirty mechanized corps with his descendants. I failed to understand the meaning of what the Grand Marshal said. "Given the number of armored troops in the German army," it was necessary not to increase, and perhaps even to reduce the number of mechanized corps in the Red Army, giving priority to equipping and training the personnel of existing tank formations. Neither arguments about the "objective possibilities of our industry" nor the "spirit of cavalry formations" have anything to do with the main question: "Why?" It is noteworthy that in 1998 a fragment of some unpublished memoirs of G.K. It follows from the above text that back in the spring of 1941, the exorbitant requests of the military leadership caused, to put it mildly, surprise not only among amateurs:

*"... Despite our repeated requests to consider and approve the plan of the country's industry for the first year of the war, developed by the General Staff and basically agreed with the people's commissars of industry, it was never approved by the government, in which a large share of the responsibility lies with the chairman of the State Planning Commission I. A. Voznesensky and Chairman of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR K. E. Voroshilov. **They were horrified and shrugged** (emphasized by me. — M.S.) at the mobilization requests of the General Staff..."*

In the canonical text of Zhukov's memoirs and reflections, we read: *"Remembering how and what we, the military, demanded from industry in the very last peaceful months, I see that sometimes we did not fully take into account all the real economic opportunities of the country. Although from our own, so to speak, departmental point of view, we were right."* (15, p. 209) I'm not sure that the modern reader can even understand what Comrade Zhukov said. The words "departmentalism", "departmental approach to business" were well-known euphemisms of the Soviet "newspeak". I remember how long I could not understand their meaning. more precisely, why is it customary to pronounce them with a condemning intonation?

What is wrong with the fact that the shoemaker considers his craft the most important thing in the world, and the pie-maker - his? In fact, the phrase "departmental approach" replaced another, much less euphonious expression: "cover your own ass." Making exorbitant, unjustified and obviously unrealistic demands on the military industry, the leaders of the military "department" prepared in advance for themselves an excuse in case of a future failure: "What could we do with such unpreparedness for war?" And in this "departmental sense" they were absolutely right. If we proceed from the interests of the case, which was entrusted to the people's commissariat of

defense, then the task becomes completely different and much more complicated. Based on the available resources of raw materials, skilled labor and production capacities, it was necessary to determine the list of weapons, military equipment, equipment and ammunition, the production of which ensured the maximum possible combat capability of the army. The task is very difficult. Especially if you take into account the level of general

education of the people who had to solve this problem. Voroshilov began to study at the age of 12 and completed his education with two classes in a rural school. At the post of People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, he was replaced by a graduate of the parish school Timoshenko. M. Kaganovich (the brother of the more tenacious L. Kaganovich) worked as the People's Commissar of the Defense Industry with two classes of lower school. Twice more educated (four grades of a rural school) was Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, head of the Main Artillery Directorate G. Kulik. The general education of Chief of the General Staff Zhukov was limited to three classes of the parochial school. Against such a background, Zhukov's predecessor as chief of the General Staff looks simply indecently intelligent - K. Meretskov had four classes in a rural school and an evening school for adults in Moscow in his educational baggage. Therefore, one should not be surprised that, for example, the gigantic planned number of tanks in the MP-41 is combined with the absence of self-propelled guns, that 11 thousand armored vehicles are adjacent in terms of the complete absence of armored personnel carriers for infantry, that the creation of a tank horde, in which there are more tankers than horsemen from Genghis Khan, resources (at least theoretically) were found, but at the same time, half of the planned number of cars is in the national economy, and they will appear in the army (if everything goes according to plan) only after the announcement of open mobilization ... Solving the problem of optimal distribution of raw materials and production resources demanded, of course, other intellectual resources at Stalin's near and far dacha. But there are gaps in the MP-41 plan that

are difficult to explain even by the two-year education of the developers of the mobplane. Military practitioners (Timoshenko, Meretskov, Zhukov) could not but know that ammunition is needed to conduct combat operations. Ultimately, it is the projectile (mine, bullet) that is the "payload" for the delivery of which the entire huge complex, consisting of tanks, armored vehicles, guns, tractors, cars, works to deliver it ... What was said about the production and accumulation of ammunition in terms of mobilization? It's impossible to believe, but NOTHING. There is no such section, subsection in the MP-41 mobilization plan, there is not at least a single line. Flasks, footcloths, wadded trousers

the number of individual pack-and-dash and pack-camel companies is indicated. *The "Central School of Communication of Dog Breeding and Pigeon Breeding"* is mentioned . It is noted that *"with the credit for the mob supply of 50% of clothing, shoes and underwear, consisting of everyday wear on the frame, the provision of the Red Army with the main items of clothing and convoy supplies according to the mob plan of 1941 will be from 01/01/1942 from 70 to 100%"* But about ammunition

- not a word.

Of course, not only the production of underpants, but also the production of ammunition in the USSR was planned. It could not be otherwise in a country that put an end to the "anarchy of the capitalist market" in a revolutionary way. There were plans for the production of ammunition, there

were resolutions of the Politburo, by which these plans were approved and put into effect, there was even a separate people's commissariat for ammunition. The fact that the availability of stocks, the planned consumption and production of ammunition were not included in the fundamental document, which is the mobilization plan for the military department, can in principle be called a "clerical flaw." However, the study of other documents raises even greater questions.

On February 14, 1941, i.e., just a few days after the signing of the MP-41 mobilization plan, the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks No. 305145 "On the plan for military orders for 1941 for ammunition" was adopted. (84)

A long, long list, and all in millions of pieces: - 4 million fragmentation tracer rounds for a 37-mm anti-aircraft gun; - 10.47 million rounds for the 45 mm cannon,

including 2.3 million armor-piercing rounds; - 4.2 million shots for 76-mm (regimental, mountain, divisional) guns; -

2.5 million rounds for a 76-mm anti-aircraft gun, - 2.5 million rounds for an 85-mm anti-aircraft

gun; - 2.6 million shots for a 122-mm howitzer of the 1938

model; - 1.0 million rounds for a 122-mm howitzer of the

1910/1930 model ... In total, 17.3 million artillery rounds of medium

and large caliber (76 mm or more), and taking into account mines - 22.8 million.

shots of caliber 76 mm or more. The numbers are astronomical. At first sight. At a second glance, after comparison with the volume of production of previous years, they will seem even greater. So, in four years (from 1936 to 1939) "only" 13.52 million artillery rounds of medium and large caliber were fired. (85, p. 191). The impression of cosmic proportions disappears, one has only to divide the astronomical figures for the production of ammunition by no less gigantic figures for the available number of artillery systems:

	Количество артсистем.	План производства 41 г. артвыстрелов, млн. шт.	На одно орудие, шт.	На одно орудие в месяц, шт.
50 мм миномёты	36 324	16,0	440	37
82-мм миномёты	14 524	4,0	275	23
120-мм миномёты	3 872	0,915	236	20
76-мм полевые пушки	15 298	4,2	275	23
76-мм зенитные пушки	4 571	2,5	547	46
122-мм гаубицы	8 124	3,6	443	37
152-мм гаубицы	3 817	0,565	148	12

From 12 to 46 shots per barrel per month. This is what really stands behind the multi-million figures of the munitions production plan for 1941. As shocking as these figures may seem, they are not only accurate, but also quite logical. The production of ammunition is the most (not "one of the most", but simply and briefly - the most) resource-intensive component of preparation for war. At least, this was the case in the armies of the first half of the 20th century, when the low accuracy of the existing weapons systems was compensated by the gigantic consumption of ammunition (remember the figures given in the previous chapter: "to suppress one machine-gun nest in the field, 120 76 mm caliber shells are required "). In general, during the years of the Great Patriotic War, the total weight of artillery ammunition produced was 10 times higher than the total weight of the entire production of artillery pieces. At the same time, it should also be taken into account that if the heavy beds and the gun carriage are made of simple steel, then the most scarce brass, copper, bronze and expensive gunpowder are spent on the production of an artillery shot. That is why they are preparing for a big war in advance, not at all hoping to cover the combat consumption of artillery rounds with current production.

In the matter of stockpiling ammunition for a future war, Germany was in a particularly difficult position. Under the terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty, the victorious countries set severe limits for it: 1,000 artillery rounds for each of the 204 75 mm guns and 800 rounds for each of the 84 105 mm howitzers. And it's all. Germany was not allowed to have guns of a larger caliber. As a result - 0.27 million rounds of medium caliber and zero rounds of large caliber. Only in the spring of 1935 did Hitler announce Germany's withdrawal from the terms of the Versailles Treaty. A little over 4 years remained before the start of the World War. History gave Hitler little time, and nature gave even less raw materials. With the extraction of copper, lead, tin in Germany, as you know, not a lot. Now it remains only to compare - how the two totalitarian regimes used the time and resources allotted to them: (9, p. 263)

Боеприпасы к:	Германия	Германия	СССР	СССР
	Общее кол-во, млн.	На один ствол, шт.	Общее кол-во, млн.	На один ствол, шт.
81-мм (82-мм) миномётам	12,7	1 100	11,3	781
75-мм (76-мм) полевым пушкам	8,0	1 900	16,4	1 100
105-мм (122-мм) гаубицам	25,8	3 650	6,7	800
150-мм (152-мм) гаубицам	7,1	1 900	4,6	700
Всего артвыстрелов	40,9	2 729	29,8	999
Всего артвыстрелов и мин	53,6	2 004	41,1	1 000

Note: without taking into account shells of corps artillery (152 mm ML-20M howitzer guns, 122 mm A-19 guns).

The figures given in the table - **40.9 million** artillery rounds of regimental and divisional artillery accumulated by June 1, 1941 in Germany, and **29.8 million in the USSR** - do not yet reflect the whole picture. Projectile to projectile is different. The most massive ammunition in Germany was an artillery round for a 105-mm field howitzer, the weight of which is 14.81 kg. The most massive ammunition in the USSR was an artillery round for a 76-mm cannon, the weight of the projectile of which is much less - 6.23 kg. If we move from the number of artillery rounds to summing up the weight of shells, then it turns out that Germany accumulated 716 kilotons of the "payload" of medium-caliber artillery (from 75 mm to 150 mm), and the Soviet Union - 432 kilotons. 1.66 times less. And this despite the fact that, according to the number of guns of all

The army had a significant numerical superiority over the Wehrmacht (see ch. 2). The situation, as we see, is rather paradoxical. The generally accepted, well-established in Russian historiography is the following idea: Germany had a huge production and scientific and technical potential, but was limited in raw materials, while the "young republic of the Soviets" had just embarked on the path of industrialization and therefore could not compete on equal terms in the field of "high technologies" with German industry. In fact, everything was exactly the opposite: the Soviet Union produced a significantly larger number of incomparably more advanced tanks, overtook Germany in the number of guns and mortars, but at the same time significantly lagged behind in the routine mass production of ammunition, although it had incomparably large reserves of non-ferrous metals and raw materials for chemical production.

Colonel General (later Marshal of Artillery) N. D. Yakovlev, who became the head of the Main Artillery Directorate of the Red Army a few days before the start of the war, drops *such a mysterious phrase* in his memoirs: *For many of us, they came as a surprise. Yes, resources are scarce. But why? Few people wanted to understand this very delicate, which, moreover, promised great troubles ...* " (90, p. 79) Unfortunately, I also do not have a single rational explanation for the reasons why such a strange situation has developed. In any case, Comrade Stalin in this matter is beyond all suspicion. He already understood

and persistently explained to his generals the role and significance of artillery ammunition in the war:

"... Artillery decides the fate of the war, mass artillery. And therefore, talk about the need to shoot at the target, and not at the squares, spare shells, this is utter stupidity that can ruin the case. If you need to fire 400,000-500,000 shells a day to smash the rear of the enemy, break the front line of the enemy so that he is not calm, so that he cannot sleep, you must not spare shells and cartridges. More shells, more ammunition to give, fewer people will be lost. You will regret cartridges and shells - there will be more

losses. We must choose. Give more shells and cartridges, spare your army, save strength, give a minimum of those killed, or spare bombs, shells ... You need to give more shells and cartridges to the enemy, feel sorry for your people, save the strength of the army ... Do not spare mines! Here is the slogan. Feel sorry for your people. If you feel sorry for bombs and shells - do not feel sorry for people, there will be fewer people. If you want us to have a war with little

bloodshed, do not spare mines ... " (68) And so throughout his speech at the April (1940) Conference of the highest command staff: "Do not spare shells, spare people ..." It did not help. The commanders (including the future Marshal of Victory) planned to deploy 30 mechanized corps with a thousand tanks each, but at the same time they accumulated 2-3 times less shells per gun barrel than in the impoverished Wehrmacht. Among other things, the limited resource of ammunition inevitably limited the training of artillery crews. According to the plans of the People's Commissariat of Defense in 1941, 1.51 million artillery rounds and 0.66 million mines were released for practical firing at the troops. (9, p. 257) In terms of a unit of armament (including 76-mm anti-aircraft and tank guns), this means: **22 shells per gun and 12 mines per mortar**. In year. Of course, the number of gun crews that must be trained in practical shooting is much less than the total balance number of guns and mortars, but this does not greatly improve the overall picture of a huge, heavily armed army that cannot shoot ...

In order to avoid misunderstanding, it should be clarified that we are not talking about that the Red Army was completely unarmed.

Moreover, even after the maximum possible deployment of military production (and even taking into account the supply of gunpowder from the Western allies), it was never as well provided with ammunition as in June 1941. The table below shows the available stocks of ammunition, expressed in ammunition at one unit of weapons: (9, p. 432)

	На 22.06.41 г.	На 1.01.43 г.
миномёты 50-мм	3,3	1,4
миномёты 82-мм	8,7	1,7
45-мм противотанковые пушки	4,2	2,8
76-мм полковые пушки	7,0	2,0
76-мм дивизионные пушки	6,5	2,0
122-мм гаубицы	10,0	4,1
152-мм гаубицы-пушки	12,2	3,6
76-мм зенитные пушки	7,3	3,5

Let us explain with a few specific examples the absolute figures of ammunition stockpiled by the beginning of the

war. According to the standards established on the basis of the practical experience of the war (and these standards were very "generous", the Germans fought with much lower artillery densities), 50 thousand shells of a 122-mm howitzer were required to destroy all firing points of a Wehrmacht infantry division that occupied a defense equipped with field fortifications . (86) The stock of 122-mm howitzer rounds accumulated by June 1, 1941 (6.7 million), relatively speaking, was enough for 134 divisions. This is just the entire army of the invasion. Of course, such a "calculation" is a very rough estimate, but it allows you to estimate the order of magnitude. For the entire period of the Battle of Stalingrad (201 days), 15.2 million mines and shells of all calibers were used up, for 50 days of the battle on the Kursk Bulge - 14 million (90) Before the start of the war, three times the amount of ammunition was accumulated (41.1 million .), and this is not counting the large calibers of corps artillery. Another notable figure is the consumption of Wehrmacht ammunition during the campaign on the Western Front in May-June 1940. The Germans defeated France and its allies, having spent "only" 88 kilotons of ammunition. (31) A very modest expense. To tell the truth, the French army did not resist much ... The Red Army resisted more strongly, so the Wehrmacht spent 583 thousand tons of ammunition of all types on the Eastern Front. The Red Army, as shown above, entered the war with 432 kilotons of regimental and divisional artillery ammunition. We should not forget that, in addition to cannon artillery, there were mortars, machine

guns, aerial bombs ... Only the distribution of resources adopted in the USSR on the eve of the war between the production of weapons and

ammunition for it. Perhaps it would be more optimal to produce a smaller number of guns, but with a large supply of ammunition for war and a large expenditure of ammunition for combat training of troops in peacetime. But in any case, with the amount of ammunition that had been accumulated by June 41st, the "shell hunger" of the Red Army was not threatened. If only these

ammunition existed in kind. Here we come (for the first and only time in this book) to a strange topic, first (as far as I know) identified by Evgeny Temezhnikov, and then developed by Doctor of Philology B. Sokolov. Were there in reality those mountains of weapons that are indicated in all reports, reports, statistical collections, scientific monographs? The relevance of such a provocative question becomes apparent from the following table: (9, pp. 399-403)

Боеприпасы к:	Боевой расход 41 г., млн. шт.	наличие на 01.01.42г.	k-
миномётам 50-мм	4,06	14,74	3,63
миномётам 82-мм	3,80	6,95	1,83
45-мм противотанковым пушкам	4,74	20,80	4,39
76-мм полковым пушкам	2,21	1,71	0,77
76-мм дивизионным пушкам	2,47	5,99	2,43
122-мм гаубицам	1,78	5,08	2,85
152-мм гаубицам	0,63	2,33	3,70
76-мм зенитным пушкам	0,59	5,30	8,98

Column "k-"= column 2/column 1 ratio.

So, official statistics (using the reference book of the Main Artillery Directorate) indicates that in the second half of 1941, the artillery of the Red Army simply did not have time to spend the ammunition available in excess. Combat consumption for six months of the war was (with the only exception of ammunition for the regimental 76-mm gun) less than the balance at the end of the year. And not just a little, not a few percent, but many times less. In this case, it doesn't matter at all what exactly caused such an overabundance of ammunition - the absence of a worthy enemy, or huge production volumes, or a meager amount of guns and howitzers themselves, or something else. The main thing is that the actual (better to say, reported) balance is several times greater than the combat consumption, that is, the available guns can shoot, shoot and shoot ... Alas, the Chief of the General Staff himself, who became commander in October 1941

Western front, in his memoirs, completely destroys such a benevolent picture: "... The

situation with ammunition was especially bad. So, of the ammunition planned for the first decade of January 1942, the impoverished Western Front was provided with: 82-mm mines - 1 percent, artillery shots - 20-30 percent ... Due to the lack of ammunition for rocket artillery, it had to be partially diverted to the rear. It is probably hard to believe that we had to set an ammunition consumption rate of 1-2 rounds per day per gun. And this, mind you, during the offensive! Zhukov's predecessor as Chief of the General Staff K. A. Meretskov in

the winter of 1941/42. commanded the Volkhov Front. How did things stand with the recorded statistically multiple excess of available ammunition resources over combat consumption?

"... My notebook testifies that the army's ammunition reserves allowed us to spend daily on average 7 rounds for a 120-mm mortar and a 122-mm howitzer and 14 mines for an 82-mm mortar ..." (89) Marshal Yakovlev

(head of the GAU in the years war) in his memoirs describes, in particular, such an episode that took place at the end of November 1941: "... Zhukov

at that time was already commander of the Western Front. And how this front was in poverty with ammunition in the difficult first months of the war is known (judging by the official statistics on the consumption and availability of ammunition, neither the Red Army as a whole, nor the most important of the fronts defending Moscow, should have been "poor." - M.S.) This, unfortunately, was the bitter truth. And so, under the impression of the next difficulties, Zhukov sent a rather harsh telegram addressed to me, in which he accused me of meagerly providing 82-mm and 120-mm mortars with mines. The irritation of the front commander was understandable. But G.K. Zhukov, however, did not know that, according to the established procedure, telegrams with applications for weapons and ammunition were sent simultaneously with the addressee according to the markup to both the Supreme and a number of members of the GKO. And here is Poskrebyshv's call. I'm going to the Kremlin, ready for anything. Stalin, after a dry greeting, asked me if I was familiar with Zhukov's telegram. I answered in the affirmative... An

The Supreme Commander suddenly took a telegram from the table and tore it up. After a little hesitation, he said that the commander Zhukov simply did not understand the situation with ammunition ... " (90, p. 71)

It is really difficult to understand this "environment". Of course, the actual supply of ammunition to the active army was also affected by transport difficulties in the late autumn of 1941, and the inescapable Russian sloppiness and bungling. Fools and roads could leave the front without ammunition even if there were millions of artillery rounds in the rear depots. Nevertheless, questions remain ... Without trying to figure out what the general of the army, who was the chief of the General Staff in the recent past, did not understand, let's move on to another issue, the essence of which is clearly documented, confirmed by many witnesses and therefore beyond doubt. By the beginning of the war there was

almost **no armor-piercing shots to the 76-mm gun**. Specifically, this "almost" is expressed by the figure of 132,000 shots available as of May 1, 1941 (9, p. 261). In fact, this is almost nothing. Based on one divisional and tank 76-mm gun, this means 12.5 shots per barrel. Even if the available crumbs are distributed extremely economically, leaving among the "consumers" of armor-piercing 76-mm shells only T-34 and KV tanks (about 1.5 thousand units), 10 emerging anti-tank artillery brigades of the RGK (1.2 thousand guns) and divisional cannons of about a hundred rifle divisions of the western military districts (1,600 guns), then we will get a ridiculous (but in fact - terrible on the eve of a big war) figure of 31 armor-piercing shots per gun. This is all on average. The average temperature in the hospital is, as you know, a deceptive value. If, theoretically, armor-piercing 76-mm shots - at least in the amount of ten pieces per barrel - existed, then this does not mean that they were in all combat units. Thus, the 7th Panzer Division (6th MK) was armed with 200 of the latest T-34 and KV tanks, but the commander's report notes the complete absence of armor-piercing 76-mm shells. The 10th Panzer Division (15th MK) for one hundred tanks (63 KV and 37 T-34) had only 192 armor-piercing shells by the start of hostilities. Less than 2 pieces per barrel. It is clear that with such a catastrophic situation with ammunition, there is no need to spend armor-piercing rounds on training gunners for tank and anti-tank 76-mm guns.

had to dream. We note right away that the amateurish proposal to use high-explosive fragmentation 76-mm shells for training purposes (the stock of which in the Red Army was measured in tens of millions of units) does not work - the propellant charge in the HE shot is much weaker, respectively, the initial velocity of the projectile is lower, and all other ballistic characteristics are significantly different from the characteristics of an armor-piercing shot. To teach like that is only to spoil ...

The absence of armor-piercing 76-mm rounds simply and unpretentiously **nullified two of the most important military-technical advantages of the Red Army: a long-barreled "three-inch" gun on T-34 and KV tanks and the presence of 16 "divisions" in the armament of a rifle division » F-22 or USV, capable of performing the role of a powerful anti-tank weapon.** Without armor-piercing shells, the latest Soviet tanks "sank" to the level of the German Pz-IV with a short-barreled 75-mm "cigarette butt". Without armor-piercing shells for a 76-mm cannon, the choice of just such a gun as the main divisional gun (instead of a light 105-mm howitzer, as it was in the Wehrmacht) turned into a clear disadvantage: to fight enemy infantry, a fragmentation 76-mm shell was much weaker than a German shell howitzers, and the use of a divisional gun as an anti-tank gun became impossible due to the lack of ammunition. What was not enough to organize mass production

of 76 mm

armor-piercing shots? Time? Resources?

production capacity? The T-34

and KV tanks were adopted by the Red Army on December 19, 1939. At least from that moment on, it was necessary to be puzzled by the production of ammunition that would allow the unique combat potential of these vehicles to be realized. The divisional 76-mm gun F-22 was put into service even earlier, in 1936. Thus, the time was. The production capacity of the Soviet military economy really made it possible to accumulate by June 1941 16.4 million high-explosive fragmentation rounds for 76-mm regimental, divisional and mountain guns and another 4.9 million rounds for 76-mm anti-aircraft guns. Total - 21.3 million 76-mm artillery rounds. At the same time, it should be taken into account that if the HE and armor-piercing shot in terms of cost and resou

roughly comparable, then an anti-aircraft shot is much more complicated and expensive (higher consumption of gunpowder for a powerful propellant charge, high-strength steel projectile body, precision mechanics in the fuse design). However, the most convincing answer to the question about the possibilities of the Soviet economy is the presence by the beginning of the war of 12.13 million armor-piercing rounds for 45-mm tank and anti-tank guns. And this quantity was still recognized as insufficient, and in terms of the production of ammunition for 1941, the production of 2.3 million armor-piercing 45-mm rounds was prescribed as a separate line. And about the production of 76-mm armor-piercing - not a word.

Only on May 14, 1941, the emergency situation with the lack of 76-mm armor-piercing rounds was realized by the country's leadership. On this day, the relevant Decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks was adopted. A month later, on June 18, 1941, the head of the GAU, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Marshal Kulik, reported to Stalin on the extremely disappointing results of the implementation of this decree:

"... The past month of work of the people's commissariats and factories has clearly shown that, despite the special importance of this order and the especially sharp raising of the issue of its provision, neither the people's commissariat of ammunition, nor the directors of the factories, nor the regional party committees provide this resolution, and the matter is clearly declining to the disruption of the order ... Plant No. 73 of the NKB had a task for May for 21,000 armor-piercing tracer 76-mm shells and for June - 47,000 (the figures are rather modest, taking into account that in general, half a million 76-mm rounds per month were produced in the country . - M.S.). The plant did not deliver a single shell in May and is also frustrating the assignment for June. At the same time, this plant is provided with both metal and equipment, has experience in the production of 76-mm armor-piercing shells since 1939 and is in the most favorable conditions in terms of production compared to other plants ... The worst organization of production at this plant, which was supposed to be a leader in the production of armor-piercing shells, makes us believe that the main reason for the failure of the order is the sabotage of the director and management of the plant ... "(91) What was it: stupidity or treason? It can be assumed that such a question was asked. The day after this letter was written, Kulik was removed from his post as head of the GAU. Even earlier, 30

In May, people's commissar for ammunition I. P. Sergeev and deputy people's commissar A. K. Khodyakov were arrested; On the same days, G.K. Savchenko, deputy head of the GAU, was arrested. Finally, on June 24, the former Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army K. A. Meretskov (at the time of his arrest, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR) was arrested. The fate of all those arrested in the "ammunition case" (which case is inextricably intertwined with the even larger "aviators' conspiracy") was very different. Vannikov was released on July 20 and the office of the Deputy People's Commissar of Armaments was returned directly from the prison cell (later he was appointed People's Commissar of Ammunition). Meretskov was released in early September and immediately appointed as the representative of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command in the North-Western and Karelian fronts. Savchenko was shot on October 28, 1941, together with a group of senior commanders of the Soviet Air Force (Rychagov, Smushkevich, Proskurov). On February 23, 1942, together with the largest group of generals and leaders of the military industry arrested in June 1941, Sergeyev and his

deputies.

What was the cause and what was the effect? Did the repressions become a severe punishment for criminal negligence, or did the atmosphere of general fear and uncertainty paralyze the meaningful activity of the leaders of the military department? I do not believe in the version of the "conspiracy of dark forces". Simply put, I don't believe it. With the level of accessibility (more precisely, total secrecy) of the NKVD / NKGB documents that exists to this day, a conscientious researcher cannot offer the public anything other than "I believe - I don't believe". However, even when our great-grandchildren live to see the declassification of the Lubyanka archives, nothing more than "I believe or I don't believe" will be known, taking into account those "massive violations of socialist legality" with which the inquiry was conducted and protocols of interrogations were written. In the meantime, one can definitely note the fact that in the USSR the production of artillery weapons and ammunition for it was led by: - People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff; - Main Artillery Directorate of the Red Army;

- separate from the GAU system of the chief of artillery of the Red Army (or artillery inspection);
- People's Commissariat for Armaments (whose enterprises, however, also produced all types of cartridges for small arms);
- People's Commissariat of Ammunition; - "mortar" people's commissariat (the name of this department was constantly changing).

To this list, one can also add a couple of designers of artillery weapons, who were close to the Boss and sometimes put all the above generals and marshals before the fact of the decisions made in Stalin's office. With a wild number of "nannies" there was no need for any "conspiracy" in order for the "child" to be without an eye ...

The absence of armor-piercing 76-mm artillery rounds was blatant, but the only absurdity of ~~by no means~~ mobilization planning. The exorbitant size of the military order for tanks, tractors, armored vehicles also raised questions. For those who were unlucky, these "questions" were asked - and in the most unflattering form. On July 22, 1941, during a meeting of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR (this is a very important circumstance - the question was asked not in a torture cellar, but at the trial, where Pavlov retracted some of the testimony knocked out of him by the "investigators") to the defendant D. G Pavlov, the former commander of the Western Front, the former head of the Main Armored Directorate of the Red Army, the former hero of the defense of Madrid, was asked the following question: "... *At the preliminary investigation (case file 88, volume I) you gave the following*

*testimony: In order to to deceive the party and the government, I know for sure that the General Staff plan for orders for wartime for tanks, cars and tractors **was overstated 10 times** (emphasized by me. - M.S.). The General Staff justified this overestimation by the availability of capacities, while in fact the capacities that industry could provide were much lower. With this plan, Meretskov intended to confuse all calculations for the supply of tanks, tractors and cars to the army in wartime.*

Do you confirm these statements? Defendant

Pavlov: Basically, yes.

*There was such a plan. **Such nonsense was written in it** (underlined by me. - M.S.). Based on this, I came to the conclusion that the plan of orders for wartime was drawn up with the aim of deceiving the party and the government ...*” (25, p. 99)

Meretskov, of course, had the most direct relation to the development of the MP-41, but still it was not he who signed "such nonsense", but Timoshenko and Zhukov. Pavlov was shot. Meretskov miraculously released on conditional "freedom". After being tortured in the cellars of the NKGB, the health of the former chief of the General Staff was severely undermined, and the caring Stalin, as the legend goes, even allowed Meretskov to report while sitting. Zhukov, on the other hand, turned out to be not to blame for anything, and to this day he prancing on a bronze horse in the center of Moscow.

Let's try to understand the mysterious numbers of the MP-41 mobplane. Yes, I understand that a senior lieutenant engineer of the reserve is not supposed to discuss a mobilization plan signed by a marshal and an army general. If Timoshenko and Zhukov reported to Stalin that without thirty mechanized corps of a thousand tanks each they could not save the fatherland of the world proletariat - and the great leader agreed with them - then there is nothing to argue about. Need to work. Guided by this ageless appeal, let's pick up a calculator and simply recalculate the MP-41 in some of its components. Can we count no worse than marshals?

Artillery systems of caliber 122 mm or more ("three-inchers" and mortars were transported by cars or horse-drawn vehicles) according to MP-41 should have been 19,451 (in fact, by June 1941 there were about 16.8 thousand guns). Add to this number another 5,151 76 mm anti-aircraft guns and 2,286 85 mm anti-aircraft guns. The total planned number of objects for towing is 26,888 units for MP-41. Even according to the super-generous standards adopted in the Red Army, **two tractors for one gun** require "only" 53,776 tractors and tractors. The compilers of MP-41 require 83,045 units (not counting Komsomol members). Heavy artillery systems (guns of 122 mm, 152 mm, 207 mm howitzers of 203 mm, 280 mm, 305 mm caliber) weighing 7 tons or more, according to the plan, should have been 6,088 units. Heavy tracked tractors (S-2, Komintern, Voroshilovets) are scheduled for four

times more (27,818 cars). Even if we consider the double redundancy of mechanical traction means to be the norm, then even then it turns out **twice as much as the real need**.

Yes, of course, "they don't think so." Artillery regiments were the main, but not the only "consumer" of tractors and tractors. Tractors were also needed for mobile repair shops, and for individual engineer-bridge battalions, and for evacuating wrecked tanks from the battlefield. Therefore, we will calculate differently, we will calculate correctly, that is, starting from the planned number of units and formations. According to the

staffing table in April 1941, an anti-tank division of a rifle or motorized division for 18 anti-tank guns was supposed to have 21 Komsomolets armored tracked tractors. Thus, for the full staffing of 210 such divisions according to the regular requirements, 4,410 Komsomol members were required. The MP-41 has the number 7 802. Doesn't the pocket pull the stock? Great, let's continue our arithmetic exercises and estimate the size of the planned "stock" for other categories of military equipment. According to the MP-41, 30 mechanized corps were deployed in the Red Army.

According to the staff, the mechanized corps was supposed to have 352 tractors (tractors). Thus, 10,560 tractors are required to fully equip all mechanized corps. Another primary recipient of mechanized weapons is the anti-tank artillery brigades of the RGK. By July 1, 1941, it was planned to deploy 10 such brigades, each with 120 powerful 76, 85 and 107-mm guns, for the transportation of which 165 tractors were supposed to be transported around the state. Accordingly, all PTABRs need another 1,650 units of mechanized thrust. Corps artillery regiments and artillery regiments of the RGK had different numbers and organization, depending on what systems they were armed with. In one regiment there could be 24, and 36, and 48 guns. Taking the average number of 36 guns, we get a figure of about 6 thousand heavy artillery systems in 94 corps and 74 regiments of the RGK. Consequently, for all heavy artillery, again taking into account double redundancy, about 12,100 tractors are needed. And, finally, the main worker of the war is the infantry. For each of the 179 rifle divisions (mountain rifle divisions were not supposed to have tractors according to the state), 99 tractors are needed. Total for all combat units and formations of the entire

The Red Army (including the Ural, Siberian and Central Asian military districts) required about **42 thousand tractors (tractors)** according to the norms "two tractors per one object", unthinkable for any army in the world . **The compilers of MP-41 requested twice as much (90.8 thousand).**

Let's not be lazy and do the same calculation for cars. So, for all 30 mechanized corps (with a standard rate of 5,165 vehicles in a corps, which means 1 vehicle for 6 personnel), 155,000 vehicles are required. For each of the 179 rifle divisions, 558 cars and trucks are needed, which is about 100,000 more vehicles. For 10 PTABRs with a staffing of 718 vehicles, a brigade needs 7,180 vehicles. Let's not forget the mountain shooters - according to the wartime staff, each of the 19 mountain rifle divisions needed 340 vehicles, in total - 6,460. The total amount is 269 thousand vehicles. In the MP-41 plan, 595 thousand were recorded. Again - **twice the regular requirement** required to equip the largest and most motorized army in the world!

It is difficult to say what would have changed in the real course of events if the MP-41 mobilization plan had been fulfilled by the start of hostilities. Completed in all respects, up to and including the last tractor and the last pair of padded trousers. I don't have an exact answer to this question. There is only a hypothesis, an assumption that nothing would change. But everyone who at least once picked up any book of Soviet military historians knows for sure: what a magnificent gift Zhukov and Timoshenko gave them. There is not and has not

been a single article, not a single book, not a single "talk show" in which communist agitators would not say with a sorrowful sob: *"History has given us little time. The Red Army, which did not receive the weapons and military equipment required by the mob plan, was completely unprepared for war. In the best case, in five years ... The district's rifle divisions were only 30-40 percent equipped with tractors and vehicles ... The absence of the prescribed means of mechanized traction inevitably led to ... The mechanized corps was equipped with heavy and medium tanks by only 20 percent ..."* Soviet (and now even Russian) historians have been arguing for more than half a century - how could this happen? The mass is spoken

versions: *"Stalin was naive and gullible, he believed Ribbentrop's word ... Stalin was angry and distrustful, he did not believe the warnings of Sorge and Churchill ... Lapota Russia was unable to produce the required amount of weapons ... History let us go a little ... "*

True, Soviet historians always talk about the notorious "unpreparedness" in terms of percentages. As a percentage of the very mobilization plan that the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court tried to present as "wrecking", but the accused army general was ready to agree only that "nonsense" was written in the plan. And the funny thing is that Soviet historians are absolutely right. There were none according to the plan. So, "blatant unpreparedness" is evident. But the enemy was "ready for war" one hundred percent. Without opening a single reference book, you can safely say: on June 22, 1941, German tank divisions were fully equipped with heavy and medium tanks with anti-cannon armor. And the Wehrmacht was provided with armored tracked tractors for anti-tank artillery in exact, absolute accordance with the staffing and mobilization plan. And armored vehicles armed with a 45 mm tank gun. And divisional guns that pierce the frontal armor of the heaviest enemy tanks. And multiple launch rocket launchers... Zero in stock, zero according to the plan, the percentage of staffing is 100. This is the famous German accuracy and pedantry. In the tank divisions of the Red Army at the beginning of the war there were already more than 1,500 KV and T-34 tanks. Thanks to the wisely compiled MP-41, this can be defined with a clear conscience with the words "a miserable 9% of the regular strength." In the Wehrmacht - not a single tank with such weapons, with such armor, with a diesel engine of such power. In the Wehrmacht, divisional howitzers are dragged by six horses. And this is called "a fully mobilized army, for which the industry of all Europe worked." Yes, Halder and Jodl did not guess to draw up a "smart" mobilization plan, it did not occur to them to include non-existent equipment in the staff of their troops, to demand from Hitler 4 tractors for one gun ... That is why their Soviet historians are different than "beaten Hitler generals and are not called.

And the final touch to the discussion of the MP-41 mobilization plan. Demanding to provide such a phenomenal level of technical equipment of the Red Army, the future Marshal of Victory wrote the following phrase into the mobplan: *"The need to cover the estimated losses for the year of the war in the junior commanding and enlisted personnel is calculated based on 100% renewal of the army."* 100% renewal of the rank and file. For one year. In one year of a successful war, no one knew anything about June 22

knew...

Part 2

**"WHEN COMRADE STALIN
SENDS US TO BATTLE..."**

Chapter

6 HYPOTHESIS #1

Of course, when Zhukov and Timoshenko signed the proposals for the MP-41, they least of all thought about creating maximum convenience for future generations of Soviet historians. They were guided by some other considerations. What? Far from claiming to be clairvoyant, I am ready to offer readers my hypothesis of what happened. For the most inattentive, I will repeat once again - **a hypothesis. This is not a certain fact.** Reliable facts have been given in previous chapters. In this (and the next) chapter, I only share my subjective **opinion.** Prohibitively inflated (inflated in relation to the capabilities of Soviet industry, inflated in comparison with the actual

number of troops of potential opponents, inflated in relation to the possibility of rational use of the armed forces) requirements of the MP-41 mobilization plan, as well as the very fact that the program was adopted in February 1941 large-scale reorganization of mechanized troops are of great "diagnostic" value. In the absence of direct documentary evidence, they allow reasonable assumptions about both Stalin's strategic plans and the mood in the highest echelon of the military leadership. But first of all, it is necessary to clearly identify and separate two **very**

important points.

First. The offensive orientation of the military doctrine of the Stalinist state is an undeniable, indisputable fact. This is not a hypothesis. **This is a statutory norm**, "categorically and convexly" expressed in the very first paragraphs of the Field Manual PU-39. *"If the enemy imposes war on us, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army will be the most attacking of all the armies that have ever attacked. We will wage the war offensively, with the most resolute goal of completely defeating the enemy on his own territory.*

Second. The offensive orientation of the plans and the system of combat training of the Red Army **can in no way serve**

proof of the aggressiveness of the foreign policy of the Stalinist empire. In no way. The army of any great power is created precisely in order to defeat (or at least significantly weaken) the armed forces of the enemy. The most effective way to solve this problem was, is and will be an offensive (*"only a decisive offensive in the main direction, completed by encirclement and relentless pursuit, leads to the complete destruction of the enemy's forces and means"*). What to do later with this enemy, with his territory, with his material and production resources, with the remnants of his army - this is already a matter of politics. A question for which the operational principles of warfare are practically irrelevant. Not only aggressive, but also not wanting anything else but peace and tranquility, the state must strive to ensure that victory is won with "little bloodshed", with minimal destruction of its own territory and minimal casualties among its own population. There is no other way to this ideal, except for a decisive offensive with the aim of "defeating the enemy on his own territory". Of the many examples that confirm this military axiom, we will cite at least one. The Israel Defense Forces (this is the official name of the armed forces of this state) did not even try to become suicidal under the existing geographical conditions (the minimum width of the country's territory within the borders established by the UN resolution of 1947 is 18 km) positional defense. And in 1948, and in 1967, and in 1973, the strategic task of defending the country was solved by decisive and bold (on the verge of recklessness) offensive actions. The depth of the blows at the same time many times exceeded the size of the territory of Israel itself. Then, after the end of the active phase of hostilities, the achieved significant weakening of the enemy's armed forces was used to force him to renounce (first temporarily, then permanently) from aggressive intentions. The captured territory (the Sinai Peninsula) was immediately returned to Egypt after the conclusion of a peace treaty. **The ultimate and invariable aggressiveness of the Stalinist empire** found its expression and confirmation not in the paragraphs of the Field Manual (these paragraphs were simply reasonable, and nothing more) and not even

in the huge size of the Red Army (fascist Italy committed numerous acts of aggression, having armed forces ridiculously small in comparison with the size of the Soviet army), but in completely different events and facts. For example, in the State Emblem of the USSR, on which the hammer and sickle covered the entire globe, on which ball the boundaries of the "proletarian state" were not marked even by the thinnest line. Those who consider this fact an insignificant detail, I will ask you to name at least one more state with similar claims in official symbols. I don't know any other country like this. The aggressiveness of the state created by Lenin-

Stalin grew out of frank, demonstrative arbitrariness and lawlessness in domestic politics (*"the dictatorship of the proletariat is power won and supported by the violence of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, power not bound by any laws"* - V. I. Lenin), from undisguised messianic ambitions of the communist leaders: the armed coup that brought them to power was declared "the greatest event in world history", the totalitarian monster created on the ruins of Russia was called "the dream of mankind come true". The aggressiveness of the Stalinist empire was shaped by all-pervading official propaganda, which day and night inspired the population (and, above all, the soldiers and commanders of the Red Army) with the thesis that they not only have the right, but even have an obligation ("our international duty") by armed means "to help »Establish Soviet order in any country that the authorities point out to them. However, with the outbreak of the World War, hypocritical ranting about "international duty" began to be replaced by frankly imperial appeals. *"Our party and the Soviet government are not fighting for peace for the sake of peace, but link the slogan of peace with the interests of socialism, with the task of ensuring the state interests of the USSR ... Wherever and under whatever conditions the Red Army wages war, it will proceed from the interests of its Motherland, from the tasks strengthening the strength and power of the Soviet Union. And only in proportion to the solution of this basic task will the Red Army fulfill its international duties.* (4, p. 578) By the beginning of the summer of 1941, Soviet military propaganda had practically thrown off all camouflage and began direct preparation of the army and people for a large-scale

conquest war. Prepared at the beginning of June 1941 by the secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Shcherbakov personally, the Directive "On the state of military-political propaganda" was already drawn up in the following terms:

*"... The foreign policy of the Soviet Union has nothing in common with pacifism, with the desire to achieve peace at all costs ... Leninism teaches that the country of socialism, using the favorable international situation, must and will be obliged to take the initiative in offensive military **operations** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) against the capitalist encirclement in order to expand the front of socialism. For the time being, the USSR could not proceed with such actions due to military weakness. But now this military weakness has become a thing of the past... Under these conditions, Lenin's slogan "to defend one's own land on foreign soil" can at any moment turn into practical actions.." (6, p. 302)* a subversive organization that, ignoring state borders and elementary norms of international law, directly from Moscow tried (fortunately - unsuccessfully) to organize the violent overthrow of power and impose a dictatorship controlled by Stalin in any

country in the world. Moreover, even before any success was achieved, the control of the NKVD over the activities of the Comintern was already so complete that any negligent, non-executive, disobedient functionary of this organization could be physically destroyed. Finally, in 1939-1940, **the aggressive foreign policy of the Stalinist empire found its direct expression in the seizure and annexation of territories, the overthrow of constitutional power, carried out by armed violence (or the threat of its use)** in relation to Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. After these events, the fig leaf of the introductory phrase of the 2nd paragraph of the Field Manual (*"If the enemy imposes war on us"*) could only mislead those who stubbornly refuse to know and see the real

facts. The Kremlin rulers frankly showed that they would interpret this phrase indefinitely broadly.

On September 17, 1939, Poland "imposed war" and "forced" the Soviet Union to unilaterally break the Non-Aggression Pact (signed on July 25, 1932, then prolonged in 1937 until 1945) by what it turned into - according to an official statement head of the Molotov government - in *"a convenient field for all sorts of accidents and surprises that could create a threat to the USSR."* At the end of September

1939, Estonia and Latvia "forced" the Soviet Union to resort to the threat of an armed invasion by the fact that on their sovereign territory, the borders of which were determined in 1920 by peace treaties with Soviet Russia, there were seaports that Stalin and Molotov very much liked. On September 24, 1939, Molotov directly told the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Estonia K. Selter: *"The Soviet Union needs access to the Baltic Sea (Leningrad was no longer considered such an "exit"? - M.S.). If you do not want to conclude a mutual assistance pact with us, then we will have to look for other ways to guarantee our security ... I advise you to meet the wishes of the Soviet Union in order to avoid the worst ... "* (1, p. 179) The promised "worst" was close and possible. Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR No. 043 / op dated September 26, 1939 demanded *"immediately begin to concentrate forces on the Estonian-Latvian border and complete it by September 29."* The troops were given the task of *"delivering a powerful and decisive blow to the Estonian troops ... defeating the enemy troops and advancing on Yuryev and later on Tallinn and Pärnu ... attacking Riga in the general direction with a quick and decisive blow on both banks of the Dvina River ..."* On September 28, 1939, the command of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet received an order to bring the fleet to full combat readiness by the morning of September 29. The fleet was given the task of *"capturing the Estonian fleet, preventing it from leaving for neutral waters, supporting the ground forces on the coast of the Gulf of Finland with artillery fire, and being ready for an amphibious landing ..."* (1, p. 180) Only the "voluntary" consent of the governments of Estonia and Latvia to the conclusion of treaties with the USSR made the planned military action superfluous.

Finland "imposed war" on the Soviet Union and "forced" its invariably peace-loving government to violate the Peace Treaty signed in 1920 and the Non-Aggression Treaty concluded between

Finland and the USSR in 1932 and prolonged in 1936 by *"outrageous provocations of the Finnish military, up to the shelling of our military units near Leningrad, which led to heavy casualties in the Red Army units"* (Molotov's speech of November 29, 1939). As is now known, Molotov's use of the plural was a pure (i.e., dirty) lie: there was only one provocation and one shelling of one Red Army unit (68th rifle regiment of the 70th rifle division near the village of Mainila), in which part, however, there were no casualties (judging by the original documents of the regiment and division, introduced into scientific circulation by P. Aptekar) at all. The only question that remains debatable is whether this "shelling" (that is, a provocation organized by Stalin's special services) was in reality or whether the entire "Mainil incident" was fictional from beginning to end.

Even more brutal were the "provocations of the Lithuanian military", which "abducted and tortured" ordinary Red Army soldiers from the Soviet military garrisons stationed in Lithuania since the autumn of 1939 in order to obtain military secrets. On May 30, 1940, the Izvestia newspaper published an official report of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the USSR about these outrageous crimes. True, the names of the "kidnapped Red Army soldiers" were confused by the Soviet side all the time. (1, p. 195) The proposal of the Lithuanian side to conduct a joint investigation was angrily rejected (*"the Lithuanian authorities, under the guise of investigating and taking measures against the perpetrators, are cracking down on friends of the USSR"* - directive of the Political Directorate of the Red Army No. 5258 of June 13, 1940) . On June 15–17, 1941, all three Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) were completely occupied by the Red Army, and a month later they were annexed. The most surprising thing is that the fate of the "kidnapped Red Army men" has never been clarified! They were simply forgotten about - and just when the establishment of complete military control over the Baltic states opened up unlimited opportunities for "search for the abducted", for bringing the guilty to justice, and the bodies of "Red Army soldiers tortured by the Lithuanian military" - to the ground. Neither the Soviet press nor the secret orders of the Soviet military command told the soldiers and commanders of the Red Army anything about the fate of their "missing" comrades...

As for Bukovina, which was never even part of the Russian Empire (and was not mentioned in any way in the secret protocol on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe between Hitler and Stalin), then as a reason "forcing" the Soviet government to demand the transfer of this territory and threaten armed intervention at the same time, Molotov on June 26, 1940 referred to the fact that *"the military weakness of the USSR has receded into the past, and the current international situation requires the quickest resolution of unresolved issues."* After that, Molotov expressed the hope that *"the answer will be given without delay, and **if it is positive** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), then the issue will be resolved peacefully."* It is also worth noting that the

only one of the "surviving" western neighbors of the Soviet Union (Turkey) was actually very close to adding to the list of victims of aggression. On November 25, 1940, the head of the government of the USSR and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, V. M. Molotov, informed the German ambassador in Moscow, Count Schulenburg, the conditions under which *"the USSR agrees to accept basically the draft four-power pact on their political cooperation and mutual economic assistance, outlined by Mr. Ribbentrop in his conversation with V. M. Molotov in Berlin on November 13, 1940."* One of the conditions for joining the USSR to the so-called "Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis" was *"the organization of the military and naval base of the USSR in the area of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles."* At the same time, it should have been stipulated that *"in the event of Turkey's refusal to join the four powers, Germany, Italy and the USSR agree to develop and implement the necessary **military** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) and diplomatic measures, which should be concluded with a special agreement"*. (4, p. 417) Before returning

to the discussion of purely military issues, it remains only to note that the whole discussion about the "preventive war", which was prepared either by Hitler, or Stalin, or both of them at the same time, is a discussion completely pointless. Neither the Stalinist empire nor Hitler's Third Reich could, due to the aggressive and criminal nature of these regimes themselves and their domestic and foreign policies, prepare and wage a "preventive war." The two greatest criminals prepared and led

aggressive, predatory wars, the result of which was the seizure of foreign territories, the destruction of the statehood of other peoples, robbery, violence and mass extrajudicial repressions against entire groups of the population (national or social) of enslaved countries. The fact that a large (in terms of duration and number of victims) part of the war took place on the territory of the Soviet Union **speaks only of the weakness of the Stalinist regime, and not at all of its greater "peacefulness"**.

Let us now turn to hypothesis No. 1. I assume that in February March 1941, Stalin **did NOT plan to start a big war in Europe in the summer of 1941**. Otherwise, he would not have started a large-scale restructuring of the army, would not have disbanded and reorganized the existing mechanized corps and tank brigades. Another of the many illustrative examples is the grandiose airfield construction program approved by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks on March 24, 1941, according to which 194 airfields (61 of them in the Western OVO and 63 in the Kiev OVO) were to have concrete runways with a length of 1200 m and a width of 100 m, underground concrete bomb storage facilities for 300 tons and gasoline storage facilities for 225 tons on each should be built. (41) In brackets, we note that the main types of bombers of the Soviet Air Force (SB, Ar-2, DB-Zf), not to mention much lighter fighter aircraft, needed a runway no more than 500–600 meters long. To carry out such a "construction of the century", on March 27, 1941, the Main Directorate of Airfield Construction (GUAS) was created, and this GUAS was created with undisguised cynicism within the framework of the NKVD of the USSR, i.e. with the initial calculation for the massive use of the slave labor of prisoners. A practical return on all these measures could be obtained no earlier than 1942. Directly in the spring of 1941, they only brought chaos to the work of industry, to the organization and combat training of troops. No reasonable person - and Stalin was no doubt a sober-minded and extremely cautious person - would have embarked on such a grandiose "overhaul of the Armed Forces" in the months before the Great War. Thus, in the constant assurances of Soviet historiography that Stalin hoped and tried to "delay the German attack until the summer

1942", there is some truth. True, the truth is bizarrely distorted. Stalin did not create the largest army in the world in order to guess with bated breath: "he will attack - he will not attack, he will attack - he will not attack ..." Stalin led his own, active and purposeful policy, he did not wait for Hitler's attack, but chose the optimal moment for inflicting a crushing hitting the enemy. In February 1941, this moment was probably attributed by him to 1942 or even 1943.

Another reason for such an assumption can be the repeatedly mentioned program for the deployment of 30 mechanized corps. *"We did not calculate the objective capabilities of our tank industry,"* the Grand Marshal of Victory bitterly complains in his memoirs, *"to fully equip the mechanized corps, 16,600 tanks of only new types were required ... there was nowhere to take such a number of tanks in one year under almost any conditions."* G.K. Zhukov is in vain to be so sorry. He and his deputies on the General Staff still knew how to count in a column. It was not at all difficult to correlate the plan for the production of tanks with the calendar plan for the acquisition of mechanized corps. Which is what they did. On February 22, 1941, the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army G.K. Zhukov approved the program for the deployment of mechanized corps. All of them were divided into 19 "combat", 7 "reduced" and 4 "reduced second stage". A clear plan for manning tanks for each corps and each division was established. In total, by the end of 1941, it was planned to have 18,804 tanks in the tank forces, including 16,655 tanks in "combat" mechanized corps. (4, p. 677) I do not know anything about the plans for staffing the 42nd year. Given that, in fact, in two years (41st and 42nd) **3,911 KV tanks** and **15,541 T-34 tanks** were produced (in 30 fully equipped mechanized corps, there should have been **3,780 KV** and **12,600 T-34 tanks in service**) , it can be assumed that the completion of the program for the deployment of tank troops according to the MP-41 plan was postponed to the end of 1942 or even to the beginning of 1943. As you know, the word "calculate"

in Russian has two meanings: to count something in the arithmetic meaning of this verb, or "assume", "hope", "predict". If Zhukov wanted to tell the truth, he would simply have to admit that to fight with

Germany in the summer of 1941, he did not expect. By the way, in February 1941, Hitler's specific plans for 1941 were not yet known to Hitler himself. Wehrmacht High Command Directive No. 050/41 of January 31, 1941 was formulated in the most cautious and vague terms: *defeat of Soviet Russia in a fleeting company even before the war against England is over.* (4, p. 576) As for Zhukov's and Timoshenko's own plans, these plans (in my personal opinion) were aimed at "postponing" the Soviet Union's invasion of Europe as much as possible. This is an extremely important point, and it should be analyzed in more detail.

- "The armor is strong" - "And our tanks are fast" - "And our people are full of courage" This is the triune formula for victory in battle, in operations, in war. No less figuratively, the same idea was expressed in the Field Manual of the Red Army

PU-39. Paragraph 6 read: ***"The most valuable thing in the Red Army is the new man of the Stalin era. He has a decisive role in the battle. Without him, all technical means of struggle are dead, in his hands they***

become a formidable weapon. No one dared to question aloud the readiness of the "new man of the Stalin era" to immediately give his life for the cause of the Lenin-Stalin party. Even in books hidden under the heading "secret", intended only for command personnel, the only possible language for discussing this topic was this. *"Fighters and commanders of the Red Army, who have perfectly mastered advanced military equipment, are politically conscious, full of hatred for the enemy, physically strong, enduring and dexterous, who know military affairs very well, selflessly devoted to their socialist homeland and the Lenin-Stalin party, in the future battles of socialism with capitalism will perform miracles such as military history does not yet know.* (34)

Neither Zhukov nor Timoshenko dared to express even the slightest doubt to Stalin about what “miracles in future battles with capitalism” could be created by the “new people of the Stalin era.” Instead, they persistently convinced the “leader” that the armor was not strong enough, and the tanks were not quite fast, and most importantly, there were not enough of them. There are few tanks, few guns, few tractors for towing guns... And so the MP-41 plan appeared with fantastic applications for weapons and military equipment. By compiling such a document, writing down unimaginable numbers in it, the Soviet

generals **hoped to solve three problems at once.** First, to compensate - as far as possible - with a huge amount of the latest technology, the low morale of the army, the lack of motivation and proper military training of personnel. In other words, to strengthen the army. I will not put even the slightest doubt on the sincere desire of Zhukov and

Timoshenko to somehow rectify the situation. Secondly, by imposing on Stalin a grandiose program of reorganization and rearmament of the army, they thereby pushed him to postpone the invasion of Europe to ever later dates. And this is a completely understandable logic of behavior (as Khoja Nasreddin used to say: “In 10 years, either the mullah will die, or the donkey will die”). At the turn of 1940-1941. there could still be hopes that the war between Germany and the British Empire would flare up with new and incomparably greater force, that this war would drag on for many years, ruin and bleed the opponents, and the Soviet Union would be able to come to the ashes of Europe in the role of supreme arbiter somewhere in the year in the 44th. Thirdly, due to human weakness, Zhukov and Timoshenko, requesting 37,000 tanks and 90,000 tracked tractors, prepared an excuse for themselves in the event of

a future defeat (“what could we do with an understaffed and almost unarmed army?”). I don’t presume to judge whether in February they assumed a catastrophe of the magnitude that actually occurred in the summer of 1941, but they had little hope that the Red Army would be able to successfully fight the Wehrmacht. How low Comrade Zhukov assessed the combat effectiveness of the Red Army can be judged by several lines that he wrote on December 6, 1965 on the manuscript, never published

"..I think that Sov. The Union would be more likely to be defeated if we deployed all our forces on the eve of the war on the border, and the German troops had in mind precisely according to their plans at the beginning of the

war to destroy them in the area of the state. borders. It is good that this did not happen, but if our main forces were defeated in the area of the state. borders, then the Nazi troops would have been able to more successfully wage

war, and Moscow and Leningrad would have been occupied in 41.
(43) Highly valuable recognition of the former chief of the General Staff. The Red Army is regarded by him only as a "whipping boy" - the more troops you gather, the more they will be killed. Zhukov does not even consider such a scenario in which the Soviet troops - subject to even greater numerical superiority over the enemy - could turn the tide at the front ... *us,*

is, of course, fear of Germany. He was afraid of the German armed forces, which marched lightly through Western Europe, and smashed, and before them everyone knelt down. He was afraid."
Zhukov said these words about Stalin, but in fact we have a completely accurate, authentic characterization of the mood in the highest echelon of the Soviet military leadership. With the only clarification that the verb "feared" in this case is hardly appropriate. Any of us is "afraid" to lie on the rails in front of a moving train, but this "fear" should be considered a manifestation of elementary prudence, and not at all cowardice. Unlike the commissars and punishers of the Civil War era (Stalin, Voroshilov, Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Blucher, Gorodovikov), the new leaders of the military department (Timoshenko, Meretskov, Zhukov, Voronov) saw the real state of affairs in the army at close range. First of all, this refers to the "first couple" (Timoshenko and Meretskov), who became the head of the People's Commissariat of Defense in the summer of 1940. Both of them took a direct part in the war with Finland. The military results of the Finnish campaign then shocked both friends and enemies of the Soviet Union. A huge world power threw into battle a 900,000-strong army equipped with thousands of tanks and planes, but at the same time it could not - in the language of the newspaper

"Pravda" of November 1939 - *"to curb the insignificant flea that jumps and grimace at our borders."*

In hindsight, a legend was invented about "indestructible fortifications to the Mannerheim Line", which no army in the world could break through. In addition to "invincible and legendary." Not to mention the fact that any of the dozens of fortified areas on the old and new Soviet western borders (through which the Germans passed in the summer of 1941, either without paying attention to them at all, or breaking through their defenses in a few days of fighting) was not inferior to the notorious "line Mannerheim" in terms of the number of pillboxes, the composition of weapons, the quality of reinforced concrete, the equipment with special equipment, not to mention all this, it should be remembered that the war with Finland was by no means limited to battles on the Karelian Isthmus. The length of the Soviet-Finnish border was about 1,350 km. The line of long-term Finnish fortifications on the Karelian Isthmus covered a section of the border with a length of about 100 km, that is, less than one tenth of the total length. At a distance of tens and hundreds of kilometers from the nearest pillbox of the "Mannerheim Line", in Northern and Ladoga Karelia, a huge group of Soviet troops (8th, 9th, 15th Armies) operated, the average monthly number of which was 350 thousand people. (2. p. 99) What was the result of these "actions"? None of the tasks were completed. For three months of

hostilities, the troops of the 8th Army moved forward at a distance of 0 - 70 km from the state border line, the troops of the 9th Army were almost everywhere thrown back to their original positions. A huge price was paid for such meager results. The total losses of the 8th, 9th and 15th Armies amounted to 141 thousand people, including 45 thousand people - irretrievably. (2, pp. 112-119) Three rifle divisions (18th, 163rd, 44th) and the 34th tank brigade were surrounded and completely defeated. Four other divisions (75th, 139th, 168th, 54th) lost 50-60% of their personnel.

"It must be said frankly that in the Petrozavodsk direction the Finns took the initiative in their own hands in mid-December and held it almost until the end of the war," Shaposhnikov, the Chief of the General Staff, was forced to admit, speaking at the Meeting of the Higher Command of the Red Army on April 16, 1940 (39) A serious statement, taking into account

attention to the balance of forces and the composition of the weapons of the parties. Among the many speakers at this Meeting was Corps Commissar Vashugin (one of the very few top Red Army commanders who himself pronounced a merciless sentence on himself in the summer of 1941). Commissar Vashugin already in the spring of 1940 noted the behavior of fighters and commanders, which was not at all like expected:

The Finns surrounded our divisions in small units. It seemed to me that in order to surround a division, you need to have three divisions. And how did it happen there? I found out in great detail the encirclement of the 97th Infantry Regiment of the 18th Division. What was this environment like? The regiment commander said that from the west there was about an enemy company, from the east there was less reinforced platoon, from the north there were regular troops - near the battalion, which occupied fortified positions in the camp, but recently ours went on reconnaissance to this camp and did not find completely an enemy. They did not see the enemy anywhere. There has never been an enemy from the south. And they considered themselves surrounded ... We took him out very simply. A couple of scouts came and said that the regiment was ordered to leave the encirclement. The garrison got up and left. (39) Things were not much better in the "surrounded" 54th division (although it was an old personnel division, specially trained for operations in the northern theater of operations). "Gusevsky (commander of the 54th division) every day, and sometimes several times a day, sent alarm telegrams ... Under the influence of these telegrams, they ruined almost all the reserves of the 9th Army, which were there and came up, they threw a lot of people there and could not organize no offensive to liberate ... Aviation was obliged to bomb, shoot, guard it for 45 days. The division was fed by the 80th air regiment for 45 days, and this regiment actually saved it, an inactive division, from starvation and death, giving the Finns no peace day and night. Every day, at the slightest activity of the Finns, panic rose there, all the gradually arriving squadrons and battalions of skiers were given there ... Gusevsky himself could not be influenced in any way, and there was no order in the besieged garrison. (39) They tried to restore order in the traditional way. A far from complete list of commanders who were shot (or shot themselves) during the three months of the "winter war" includes: the commander of the 44th division

Vinogradov, chief of staff and head of the political department of this division Volkov and Pakhomenko, commander and commissar of the 662nd regiment of the 163rd division Sharov and Podkhomutov. the commander of the 18th division Kondrashev, the commander of the 34th tank brigade Kondratiev, the chief of staff of the brigade Smirnov and the head of the Special Department of the brigade Doronin, the commander of the 56th rifle corps

Cherepanov ... No "Mannerheim floating line" was found in the cold waters of the Baltic. However, the effectiveness of the actions of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet (KBF) turned out to be amazingly low. From the beginning of December 1939 to mid-January 1940, 349 (three hundred and forty-nine) transport ships successfully passed to the ports of Finland. Of the 49 submarines that were part of the combat structure of the KBF, only 27 were capable of participating in hostilities. Of the 27 submarines of the KBF, only 8 attacked the enemy at least once. Eight submarines attacked a total of 11 ships, of which 10 did not have security and any weapons. Of the 11 ships attacked, only 5 (five) were destroyed, including the Estonian motor ship Kassari, which was sunk outside the zone of the officially declared naval blockade. Thus, practically not encountering armed opposition either at sea or in the skies over the Baltic, the submarine forces of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet were able to sink only 1.1% of the total number of ships that entered the ports of Finland (40, p. 120) And no one flew the "Mannerheim Line" I haven't figured it out yet, but I'm sorry. It is necessary to somehow explain the fact that with the final ratio of the number of combat aircraft of 26 to 1 in favor of the Soviet Air Force, the ratio of combat (not counting technical) losses was 8 to 1 in favor of the tiny Finnish aviation.

Such "miracles" were shown by the armed forces of the Stalinist empire, having in front of them a small, poorly armed, practically devoid of tanks and bomber aircraft, the Finnish army. What could be expected from the Red Army in the event of an armed clash with the German Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe? **This key question was given at least three different response.**

Hitler was convinced (and he assured his generals of this) that the Red Army was a "clay colossus without a head" that would crumble after the first blow. It is enough to remember that

Directive No. 32, defining the actions of the German armed forces *"after the collapse of the Soviet Union creates the appropriate conditions"*, was signed by him on June 11, 1941. This is not a typo - June 11! 11 days before the start of the war, *strategic tasks were already formulated, which, as a result of the victorious completion of the campaign to the East, could be set before the armed forces at the end of the autumn of 1941 and the winter of 1941/42.*

Zhukov and Timoshenko, presumably, still hoped that the Red Army was "repairable", and therefore strongly recommended to Stalin that a large-scale "major overhaul" be initiated, the bloated "estimate" of which they presented to him in the form of the MP-41 mobilization plan.

Stalin - as far as one can judge from his speeches at the multi-day Meeting of the top command staff of the Red Army in April 1940 - was not at all dejected, shocked, or even simply upset by the level of combat effectiveness of his army. At

least, this is the line of conduct, this is the nature of the discussion, he asked the high assembly. Stalin paternally scolded the guilty, praised the Red Army as a whole, not forgetting to gently point out individual shortcomings, and willingly joked a lot. The situation was purely family - a meeting of a strict father with his beloved and loving sons. Well, the final chords of Stalin's speech completely thundered with triumphant copper: "... Our army

became strong with both feet on the rails of the new, real Soviet modern army ... We defeated not only the Finns, we also defeated their European teachers - we defeated the German defensive equipment, the English defensive equipment won, the French defensive technique was defeated. Not only the Finns were defeated, but also the equipment of the advanced states of Europe. Not only the technique of the advanced states of Europe, we defeated their tactics, their strategy ... We defeated the technique, tactics and strategy of the advanced states of Europe, whose representatives were teachers of the Finns. This is our main victory." (Stormy applause, everyone stands up, shouts of "Hurrah!" Shouts: "Hurrah for comrade Stalin!" The participants in the meeting give a stormy ovation in honor of comrade Stalin.) (39) The first, main and, in fact, the only argument in favor of the version that Stalin allegedly was very

dissatisfied with the actions of the Red Army in the Finnish war is the fact of a change in the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense (May 1940), and then the General Staff (August 1940). At the same time, another fact is strangely ignored - the most important "heroes" of the Finnish war were appointed to the places vacated after the resignation of Voroshilov and Shaposhnikov. In an equally strange way, another fact fell out of the field of view of historians - where exactly Stalin "kicked out" Voroshilov in the neck. But it is enough to open any biographical directory to find out that after being released from the duties of Commissar of Defense Comrade. Voroshilov on the same day, still in the same highest military rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union, became chairman of the Defense Committee under the government of the USSR. On June 22, 1941, Voroshilov (together with Molotov and Beria) was the last to leave Stalin's office. On June 30, 1941, Voroshilov joined the State Defense Committee, that is, among those five people (Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Malenkov, Beria), in whose hands all power in the country was nominally concentrated. It is hardly possible to call all this "disgrace and exile" ...

The striking discrepancy between Hitler's and Stalin's ideas about the real combat effectiveness of the Red Army played, without exaggeration, a fatal role at that moment in history when Stalin's strategic plans changed radically. In the spring of 1941, Stalin decided to bring the start of the Great War much closer. When did this sharp turn in Stalin's plans take place? Oddly enough, but we can determine this point in time with an accuracy of up to one month (which, in the absence of direct documentary evidence, can be considered high accuracy). **Not earlier than April 6 - and not later than May 5, 1941.** April 6,

1941 is one of the most mysterious days in the history of the Second World War. Recall the main outline of events. In the spring of 1941, the Balkans became the center of the most acute military-political crisis. Albania and Greece were drawn into the orbit of the war, Bulgaria, under the pressure of Berlin, joined the "axis" and allowed the entry of German troops into its territory. Then came the turn of Yugoslavia, whose government on March 25 signed in Vienna a protocol on accession to the Tripartite Alliance. On the night of March 26-27, a military coup took place in Belgrade, inspired by that

whether by British or Soviet intelligence services. The new government of General Simovich announced its intention to give a firm rebuff to German claims and asked the Soviet Union for help. On April 3 (i.e., just a week after the coup), the Yugoslav delegation was already conducting negotiations in Moscow on the conclusion of a treaty of friendship and cooperation with Stalin himself. Despite the fact that Germany, through Ambassador Schulenburg, brought to the attention of Molotov its opinion that "the moment for concluding an agreement with Yugoslavia was chosen unsuccessfully and causes an undesirable impression", at 2.30 am on April 6, 1941, the Soviet-Yugoslav agreement was signed. A few hours after its signing, Luftwaffe aircraft subjected Belgrade to a fierce bombardment, and German troops invaded Yugoslavia. The Soviet Union did nothing to help its new friend. On April 6, at about 4 pm Moscow time, Molotov received Schulenburg and, after listening to the official announcement of the Wehrmacht's invasion of Yugoslavia, limited himself to a melancholic remark: "It is extremely sad that, despite *all efforts, the expansion of the war thus turned out to be inevitable ...* » (53, p. 156) What was it? Why was it defiantly "teasing" Hitler, not having

the desire (and the practical possibility) to provide Yugoslavia with effective military assistance? In any case, this strange diplomatic demarche was received with extreme irritation in Berlin. Later (June 22, 1941), it was the events of April 5–6 that were used in the German memorandum declaring war on the Soviet Union as the main evidence of the hostile policy that the Soviet Union allegedly pursued against Germany ("With the conclusion of the Soviet-Yugoslav friendship treaty, which *strengthened the rear of the Belgrade conspirators, the USSR joined the common Anglo-Yugoslav-Greek front directed against Germany*"). Be that as it may, I consider it possible to assume that on April 6, 1941, the war against Germany still seemed to Stalin a matter of the future. Close, but future. Otherwise, he would not have provoked Hitler so clearly and aroused bad suspicions in him. Before the war itself, Stalin pursued a completely different line, affectionately stroking, as V. Suvorov wrote, "a German bull brought to him for slaughter."

By May 5, 1941, the situation had completely changed. On May 5, Stalin already knew that only a few weeks were left before the start of the Great Campaign. Only this can explain his decision to take the post of head of government, which surprised the whole world. It is hardly necessary to explain that even before May 5, Comrade Stalin, being just one of the many deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, had absolute power. And until May 5, 1941, Comrade Molotov, being the nominal Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, coordinated any step, any decision of the government with the will of Stalin. For many years, Stalin ruled the country, feeling no need to formalize his real status as the sole dictator. And if on May 5, 1941, such a strange act was nevertheless committed, then it is difficult to find any other explanation for this, except for Stalin's immodest desire to leave his personal signature on orders and documents that will forever change the course of world history. Between April 6 and May 5, there was still the day April 13, 1941. On this day, a major event

of world significance took place (the Neutrality Pact between the USSR and Japan was signed in Moscow - an agreement that freed Stalin's hands for action in the West), and also happened a small episode at the Moscow railway station, which, however, attracted the attention of politicians and diplomats. In the report, which the German Ambassador on the same day marked "Urgent! Secret! sent to Berlin, this strange episode was described as follows:

"..Obviously unexpectedly for both the Japanese and the Russians, Stalin and Molotov suddenly appeared and, in an emphatically friendly manner, greeted Matsuoka and the Japanese who were present there and wished them a pleasant journey. Then Stalin loudly asked about me and, finding me, came up, put his arm around my shoulders and said: "We must remain friends, and you must now do everything for this!" Then Stalin turned to the acting German military attaché, Colonel Krebs, and, having previously made sure that he was a German, told him: "We will remain friends with you in any case." Stalin, undoubtedly, welcomed Colonel Krebs and me in this way intentionally and thus consciously to the general large audience that was present there. (53, p. 157)

attention

Demonstrative hugs were soon supplemented by other equally demonstrative actions. In Moscow, countries were closed embassies and diplomatic missions defeated and occupied by the Wehrmacht.

The embassy of the same Yugoslavia was no exception, on the friendship agreement with which, as they say, "the ink has not yet dried up." In May 1941, the Soviet Union with lightning speed recognized the pro-German government of Iraq, which came to power through a military coup. Questions of economic cooperation were also resolved in the most benevolent spirit towards Germany. The memorandum of the German Foreign Ministry dated May 15, 1941 noted:

"Negotiations with the First Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the USSR were held by Krutikov in a very constructive spirit... I get the impression that we could present economic demands to Moscow, even going beyond the scope of the agreement of January 10, 1941... At this time, the volume of raw materials due to by agreement, is delivered by the Russians punctually, despite the fact that it costs them great effort; agreements, especially with regard to grain, are carried out remarkably ... " (53, p. 164) The aged Count Schulenburg was completely fascinated by the embrace of hospitable Moscow hosts (by the way, in 1944 the former German ambassador to the USSR was executed for participating in a conspiracy

against Hitler , so that his "naive credulity" might not have been as naive as it seems) On May 24, 1941, in another report to Berlin, he writes: "... Observations made *here since Stalin assumed the highest state power show that Stalin and Molotov hold positions that are the most important for the foreign policy of the USSR. That this foreign policy is primarily aimed at preventing a clash with Germany is proved by the position taken by the Soviet government in recent weeks*

(emphasized by me. - M.S.), *the tone of the Soviet press, which considers all events relating to Germany in a non-provocative objections form, and compliance with economic agreements...*" (53, p. 165)

Hitler, unfortunately, was not so gullible. He correlated the information coming to him through intelligence channels about the deployment of the Red Army with the unexpectedly developed loyalty of Moscow and appreciated this turn at its true worth. On April 30, 1941, Hitler set the start date for Operation Barbarossa (June 22) and the date for the railroads to switch to the maximum military traffic schedule (May 23). On June 8, the tasks according to the invasion plan were brought to the attention of the army commanders, on June 10 they were informed of the start date of the operation. On the evening of June 21, in a letter to Mussolini, Hitler summarized his decision in these words: *"After much deliberation, I have come to the conclusion that it is better to break this noose before it is tightened."* However, Hitler's thoughts about that time were not so painful, and the whole phrase about the "noose around the neck" was rather a tribute to the cheap theatricality that the Italian "Duce" loved so much. Hitler had no doubts

about the rapid and major success. Not the slightest. Such optimistic forecasts were facilitated not only by the general idea of the Soviet Union as a "clay colossus without a head", but also by the more than strange work of the German intelligence services. If Soviet intelligence constantly overestimated the total number of Wehrmacht divisions, and the number of tanks in tank divisions, and the performance characteristics of German tanks, then the office of the mysterious Admiral Canaris (the head of German military intelligence and an agent of the British special services concurrently) systematically underestimated all estimates of the military potential of the Soviet Union. On February 3, 1941, at a meeting between Hitler and the top generals, the composition of the Red Army was estimated as follows: *"100 infantry divisions, 25 cavalry divisions; about 30 mechanized divisions."* As you can see, the total number is underestimated by half, the share of cavalry is exorbitantly high, there is not even the slightest mention of the existence of mechanized (tank) corps

in the structure of the Red Army. Lieutenant General Köstring, the German military attaché in the USSR, went even further, reporting in Berlin in March 1941 that the Red Army had only 6 thousand tanks in service, which were distributed in the form of one tank company (30 tanks) for each of 200 rifle divisions. (42, p. 69) About the T-34 and KV tanks adopted

weapons as early as December 19, 1939, the German command until the start of the war had only the most vague guesses. The list of such examples can go on and on, but we will immediately move on to the result of such a comprehensive underestimation of the enemy. And the result was that **the forces allocated for Barbarossa were so small that Stalin could not believe that Hitler had decided to invade.**

Indeed, in fact, as part of three army groups ("North", "Center", "South") on the western border of the Soviet Union concentrated: 84 infantry divisions, 17 tank and 14 motorized divisions (for a total of "84 infantry divisions" we also included 4 light infantry, 1 cavalry and 2 mountain rifle divisions, the total number of 14 motorized divisions included parts of the SS troops corresponding to 5 "settlement divisions"). **In total - 115 divisions.** How could Stalin believe that with such forces Hitler would risk launching an offensive against the Red Army, which in peacetime had more than 300 divisions? Moreover, even these 115 divisions were not yet on the borders of the USSR in May 1941. In fact, on May 15, 1941, 66 infantry, 3 tank and 1 motorized divisions of the Wehrmacht were concentrated in the East. (1, p. 304) Soviet intelligence estimated (with traditional overestimation) the composition of the enemy grouping at 119 divisions, but even this was less than half of the total strength of the Wehrmacht, what the number of Soviet intelligence determined (again, overestimating the real percentage by 25-30) in 260-285 divisions. How could Stalin believe that Hitler would launch an invasion without having gathered at least two-thirds of his army on the Soviet border? As already noted in the first

chapter, Soviet intelligence and the high command of the Red Army expected to see 175-200 divisions with 10 thousand tanks in the German grouping on the Eastern Front. There was nothing like this, nothing close to such a concentration of forces in May 1941. On a vast area from the Baltic to the Carpathians, German troops were concentrated, numerically smaller than the Wehrmacht grouping on the border with Belgium and Holland on May 10, 1940. Therefore, Stalin, not paying much attention to the strange throwing of his Berlin competitor, continued the forced preparation for the Great Campaign.

Chapter

7 HYPOTHESIS #2

On May 5, 1941, Stalin officially assumed the post of head of the government of the USSR (Molotov became his deputy and retained the post of people's commissar for foreign affairs). On the same day, May 5, 1941, a solemn reception was held in the Grand Kremlin Palace in honor of the graduates of the military academies of the Red Army. Stalin made a big speech (it lasted about 40 minutes, which was a lot for the "Master" who was stingy with words) to the audience.

The significance of this speech is enhanced by the fact that it was made on the very day when Stalin assumed the post of head of government, which undoubtedly attracted the attention of everyone, including the participants in the solemn meeting in the Kremlin Palace.

During Stalin's lifetime, the text of his speech of May 5, 1941 was never published - neither before the start of the war, nor after its victorious conclusion. This fact alone gives grounds to assert that in his speech to the graduates of the military academy, Stalin did not say a word about the possibility of a German attack on the USSR - otherwise, the story of "the brilliant insight of the great leader, who long before the treacherous invasion unraveled the insidious plan of the enemy", forced to teach even younger students. In 1995, the Russian Foreign Ministry published the text of Stalin's speech in the multi-volume collection Documents of Foreign Policy (vol. 23, book 2). At the end of the publication is, as expected, a link to the source of information: the magazine "Art of Cinema", No. 5 for 1990. And this is really "cinema". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the most official of all official organizations. In the collection of documents published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no other references can be made except for the numbers of archival files (or the numbers of the Izvestia newspaper, which was the official place for publishing government reports). They are not there - publication with a link to a literary magazine is the only (at least in the entire 23rd volume) exception to the rule. In fact, the compilers of the collection wisely

"washed their hands", shifting the responsibility for the authenticity of the text of Stalin's speech to the "Art of Cinema".

From the point of view of art and literary language, the published text is clearly incomplete. The last two sentences sound like this: *"Any politician, any figure who allows himself a sense of complacency, may find himself in front of a surprise, as France was in front of a catastrophe. Once again, I congratulate you and wish you success."* The inconsistency, in my opinion, is the most obvious. All of Stalin's speeches and articles were distinguished by clarity, precision, consistency, simplicity (if not primitiveness) of presentation. Question - answer, question - answer. No postmodern "stream of consciousness". The mention of the defeat of France could not be the last (before the traditional wish for success) meaningful phrase of Stalin's speech to the commanders of the Red Army. However, the published fragments of Stalin's speech are quite eloquent:

"... Is the German army really invincible? No. There are no and never were invincible armies in the world. There are better, good and weak armies... From the military point of view, there is nothing special in the German army, either in tanks, or in artillery, or in aviation. A significant part of the German army is losing its ardor, which was available at the beginning of the war. In addition, boasting, complacency, arrogance appeared in the German army. The military thought of Germany does not move forward, military equipment lags not only behind ours, but Germany in terms of aviation begins to overtake America ... In terms of further military growth, the German army has lost its taste for further improvement of military equipment. The Germans believe that their army is the most ideal, the best, the most invincible. This is not true. The army must be improved day by day."

And it was precisely after this passage that the significant conclusion followed that *"any politician who allows a sense of complacency may face surprise, as France faced a catastrophe."* Even without the full text of Stalin's speech, it's not hard to guess who he meant

by the "smug politician", whose catastrophic "surprise" ... Or you can not guess, but turn to the testimony of captured Red Army commanders stored in

Maybe

turn out to be

before

German

archives. I. Hoffmann (a German historian who worked at the Bundeswehr Military History Research Center from 1960 to 1995 and eventually became the Center's scientific director) in his study (42) gives numerous examples of how commanders of different ages and ranks, captured in at different times and in different sectors of the front, in almost identical words, they convey Stalin's statements that "whether Germany wants it or not, there will be a war between the Soviet Union and Germany." No less remarkable is the information published in the memoirs of the adviser to the German Embassy in the USSR, Hilger. He cites the testimony of three captured Soviet officers who reported how Stalin during a banquet (an event that invariably accompanies ceremonial meetings in the Kremlin palaces) stated something like this: "The era of peace politics has ended and the era of the forcible expansion of the socialist front has come . *Whoever does not recognize the need for offensive actions is either a philistine or a fool.* (42, p. 41) With the exception of the last rude phrase, these testimonies of prisoners, which cause understandable distrust, completely coincide with the record of toasts that were made in the RGASPI (f. 558, op. at a banquet. According to this entry, Stalin said:

"For the time being, for the time being, we carried out a line for defense - until we re-equipped our army, did not supply the army with modern means of struggle. And now that we have reconstructed our army, saturated it with equipment for modern combat, when we have become strong, now we must move from defense to offensive. In defending our country, we must act offensively. From defense to move on to the military policy of offensive actions ... " (6, p. 163)

Let us now pass from the discussion of drunken speeches to the consideration of **the specific operational plans** of the High Command of the Red Army. In the first half of the 1990s, the following documents were declassified and published (4.6): - Memorandum

of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to I. V. Stalin and V. M. Molotov "On the Fundamentals strate

Armed Forces of the USSR in the West and in the East", w / n, no later than August 16, 1940 (TsAMO. f. 16. op. 2951, d. 239, l. 1 - 37);

- A document with a similar title, but with a number (No. 103202) and the exact date of signing (September 18, 1940) (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951, d. 239, l. 197-244);

- Memorandum of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to I. V. Stalin and V. M. Molotov No. 103313 (the document begins with the words "I report for your approval the main conclusions from your instructions given on October 5, 1940 . *when considering plans for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR for 1941* ", in connection with which it is usually called the "updated October strategic deployment plan ") (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951.d. 242, l. 84-90) ;

- Memorandum of the chief of staff of the Kiev OVO by decision of the Military Council of the South-Western Front according to the deployment plan for 1940, w / n, no later than December 1940 (TsAMO, f. 16, op. 2951. d. 239, l. 245-277); - Excerpts from

the report of the General Staff of the Red Army "On the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the West and in the East", b / n, dated March 11, 1940 (TsAMO, f.16, op. 2951, d.241, l. 1 - 16); - Directive of

the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR and the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army to the commander of the troops of the Western OVO on the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the district troops, w / n, April 1941 (TsAMO, f. 16. op. 2951, d. 237, l. 48-64);

- "Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies", w / n, not earlier than May 15, 1941 (TsAMO, f. 16. op. 2951, d. 237, l. 1 - 15). The documents

describing the operational plans of the Soviet command should also include the materials of the January (1941) operational-strategic games held by the highest command staff of the Red Army. We are led to this conclusion not only by simple everyday logic, but also by an article published only in 1992 by Marshal A.M. Vasilevsky (as deputy chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff, he participated in the development of all the above operational plans), which directly indicates that that "in January

In 1941, when the proximity of war was already felt quite distinctly, the main points of the operational plan were tested in a strategic military game with the participation of the highest command of the armed forces. (43) Strictly

speaking, there is plenty of information to think about. Historians have at their disposal five variants of the general plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army and materials on the operational plans of the two most important fronts: the Southwestern and Western. The content of the operational-strategic plans of the Soviet command has already been analyzed in detail in the works of P. Bobylev, V. Danilov, V. Kiselev, M. Meltyukhov, B. Petrov and other Russian historians. For the purposes of our study, it is sufficient to note only a few key points.

Firstly, there was an operational plan for a big war in the West ("An operational plan for the war against Germany existed, and it was worked out not only in the General Staff, but also detailed by the commanders of the troops and headquarters of the western border military districts of the Soviet Union" - A. M. Vasilevsky). It is strange that this should be emphasized, but other communist propagandists, in their "zeal beyond reason", even went so far as to assert that the "naive and gullible" Stalin replaced the development of plans for military operations by lovingly looking at Ribbentrop's signature on the notorious Non-Aggression Pact. Of course, there was a plan for a war with Germany, and many months of work on it went on without any regard for the pact. It is noteworthy that all operational plans known to us are in fact one and the same document, only slightly changing from one version to another. There is not only a semantic, but also a clear textual similarity of all planes. The circle of people allowed to get acquainted with these documents is extremely limited and almost unchanged: Stalin, Molotov, Timoshenko, Vasilevsky, Vatutin and three successive chiefs of the General Staff of the Red Army (Shaposhnikov, Meretskov, Zhukov).

Secondly, **without exception, all plans represent a plan for an offensive operation carried out outside the state borders of the USSR**, while Germany is invariably named the main adversary. Fighting on your own

territories **are not even considered as one of the possible scenarios** for the development of the events of the war, the entire toponymy of the theater of alleged military operations is the names of Polish and Prussian cities and rivers. The depth of the offensive within the framework of solving the "first" or "immediate" strategic task is 250-300 km, the duration of the operation is 20-30 days.

Thirdly, each of the variants of the strategic deployment plan contains a statement of the unfortunate fact that "the General Staff of the spacecraft does not have documentary data on the operational plans of potential adversaries both in the West and in the East." This phrase should have deservedly taken the place of an epigraph to a variety of works by both Soviet and recent Russian writers on their favorite topic "Hitler's secrets on Stalin's table." Fourthly, all variants of the plan are quite

adventuristic and probably reflect that hidden struggle of opinions between Stalin and the top military leadership, which was mentioned above. The estimate of the number of enemy troops, with which each of the documents under consideration begins, is significantly overestimated. As a result, it turns out that the Red Army must go on a decisive offensive, with an extremely slight numerical superiority. Moreover, according to the September (1940) version of the strategic deployment plan, the Red Army was even inferior to the proposed grouping of German troops (not counting the troops of Germany's allies!) In terms of the number of rifle (infantry) divisions, but it was still planned "with a powerful strike in the directions of Lublin and Krakow and further to Breslau in the first stage of the war, cut off Germany from the Balkan countries and deprive her of the most important economic bases. Strange arrogance - especially considering that the plan for the war with Finland, drawn up on the same day, September 18, 1940 (4, pp. 254-260), envisaged the creation of a threefold superiority over the Finnish army in the number of divisions and a tenfold superiority in aviation. It seems that the military (Tymoshenko, Shaposhnikov, Mernikov), purposefully overestimating the military potential of Germany, tried to persuade the "Master" to greater restraint, to postpone the start of the invasion of Europe to a later date, to a time when it would be possible to create a significant

superiority of forces, but Comrade Stalin stubbornly demanded bold offensive actions.

Fifth and, probably, the most important: only the August (1940) version of the plan makes the choice of the direction of the main attack of the Red Army dependent on the likely plans of the enemy ("*assuming that the main attack of the Germans will be directed north of the mouth of the San River, it is necessary and to have the main forces of the Red Army deployed to the north of Polissya*"). With a very, very big stretch, this logic can also be called "planning a counterstrike." All subsequent options establish the direction of the main attack based on considerations of military-operational and political "conveniences" for the advancing Red Army, and not at all from an assessment of the enemy's plans. More specifically: starting from September 1940, all variants of the operational plan provide for the main attack in southern Poland, from the territory of the so-called "Lviv salient" in the general direction of Krakow - Katowice. The compilers of the documents justify the choice of this particular direction by the fact that the enemy (unlike the "northern version" of the offensive in East Prussia) does not have long-term defensive fortifications, the nature of the terrain, which makes it possible to realize the striking power of tank (mechanized) formations to a greater extent, and the ability to cut off Germany from its main allies (Romania, Hungary and Bulgaria), from raw materials (oil) and food resources of southeastern Europe. The assessment of the probable plans of the German command (the Germans delivering the main attack to the north or south of the swamps of Polesie) changes several times, but this does not affect the choice of the direction of the main attack of the Red Army. In his unpublished article in 1965, Marshal Vasilevsky, the actual developer (it

was by his hand that they were written) of the pre-war plans for the strategic deployment of the Red Army, wrote: "*Speaking of mistakes, we must first say about the lack of a direct answer to the main question - about the probability attack on us by fascist Germany, not to mention the determination of at least the approximate timing of this attack.*" (43) The same thought can be expressed more clearly and simply: Stalin led his active "game" and gave the enemy the initiative in choosing the time and place of the first

wasn't going to get hit. Today it can already be firmly asserted that the provision included in the Field Manual that *"we will wage the war offensively, with the most resolute goal of completely defeating the enemy on his own territory"* was by no means a propaganda slogan, but a completely adequate reflection of the strategic plans of the highest military -political leadership of the USSR. It is worth noting one more,

very remarkable detail. The documents drawn up in the districts (or addressed to the command of the districts) in content, and in many respects and textually, in whole paragraphs, coincide with the general plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army and the general plan for the first offensive operations.

But there is also **an important difference**. The first lines of the "district documents" (a note by the chief of staff of the Kiev OVO in December 1940 and the Directive for the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the Western OVO in April

1941) contain the following phrase: *"Non-aggression pacts between the USSR and Germany, between the USSR and Italy are currently time, it can be assumed, ensure a peaceful situation on our western borders.* In the documents of the highest leadership (memorandums of the people's commissar of defense addressed to Stalin and Molotov), the notorious pact is not mentioned even once! Further, in April 1941, the Directive of

the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR orients the commander of the Zapadnik troops in the following way: *"The USSR does not think of attacking Germany and Italy. These states, apparently, also do not think of attacking the USSR in the near future. However, taking into account (the following is a list of various foreign policy events. - M.S.), when developing a plan for the defense of the USSR, it is necessary to keep in mind not only*

such adversaries as Finland, Romania, England, but also such possible adversaries as Germany, Italy and Japan". (6, p. 134) And this despite the fact that in the documents of the high command England (at least since August 1940) was never named as a possible enemy of the USSR, but Germany was invariably named the main enemy (from the same time) , which supposedly could be supported by Italy, Hungary, Romania and Finland. Thus, **deliberate misinformation of own**

rose even to the level of district commanders. After this, is it any wonder that Soviet generals and marshals, who met the war in the positions of commanders of regiments and divisions, in their memoirs express the opinion (perhaps quite sincerely) that "Stalin believed in Ribbentrop's signature on the Non-Aggression Pact ...".

If the scientific discussion about the general direction and specific content of the operational plans of the Red Army command can be considered basically completed by now, then **the question of the moment planned by Stalin for the start of the implementation of these plans still remains debatable.** And this is not surprising: if the mere fact of developing operational plans for offensive operations on foreign territory can still be called, with some stretch, routine work, which is carried out by any General Staff as a precaution, then setting a specific date for the planned invasion of Europe forces us to re-evaluate the role Soviet Union in World War II. It is clear that the official Soviet and post-Soviet "historical science" made every effort to conceal and distort information on this issue. In general, the situation that has developed in the domestic historiography of the initial period of the Great Patriotic War cannot

be called otherwise than the "theater of the absurd". The attentive reader has probably noticed that all the above strategic military planning documents are in one place: f. 16, op. 2951 Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense. This fund is not declassified, which means that it is not available to anyone except for the biased "historians from Glavpur". Thus, for more than 10 years there has been a completely crazy situation when a number of documents have been published but not declassified! We can neither verify the conformity of the published texts with the original documents, nor fill in the fragments "forgotten" by the publishers. Although none other than Mahmud Akhmetovich himself reported in 1995 that in the Report of March 11, 1941 (in that part of it that determined the procedure for the Southwestern Front - and which was not published in the "robin"!) Vatutin's hand was inscribed with the phrase: *"Offensive to begin 12.6."* (44, p. 93) How is this to be understood? IN

lack of access to f.16, op. 2951 one can only guess about the reliability of this information ... Let us

return, however, to the published documents. In December 1940, as far as can be judged from the Memorandum of the Chief of Staff of the Kiev OVO, the outbreak of hostilities seemed to be relegated to an indefinite future ("Germany's armed attack on the USSR is most likely in a situation where Germany will be the winner in the fight against England and retain its economic and military dominance in the Balkans). The end of the war between Germany and England was not in sight, therefore, the Soviet command still had a lot of time to prepare and deliver the first strike. All other plans for the strategic deployment of 1940, listed above, do not contain any direct or indirect indications of the start date of the deployment. The fact that the course of operational games in January 1941 was linked to August dates attracts attention, but it would be rash to draw far-reaching conclusions on this basis. The report of the General Staff of the Red Army dated March 11, 1941 is given - contrary to all written and unwritten rules for the scientific publication of historical documents - in an extremely truncated form. In fact, only a detailed review of the alleged plans and enemy groupings has been published. The own plans of the Soviet command were left behind the scenes.

The April (1941) Directive of the People's Commissar of Defense for the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the troops of the Western OVO, it seems, also proceeds from the notion that the attack will take place in

1942 or even later. In accordance with this Directive, crushing dissecting blows on Warsaw and Radom should be inflicted by five mechanized corps, of which in the summer of 1941 only one (6th MK) was fully equipped, the other two (11th MK and 14th MK) were completing the formation only at the beginning of 1942, and two more mechanized corps (13th MK and 17th MK) were included in the list of "reduced", and at the end of 1941 their planned staffing with tanks did not exceed 25-30%. It is unlikely that based on such forces, plans were drawn up for delivering a *"strike by the left wing of the front in the general direction of Sedlec, Radom with the aim of complete encirclement, in cooperation with the Southw*

enemy groupings ... on the third day of the Sedlec operation and on the fifth day - the crossings on the river. Vistula.."

The greatest excitement was caused by the publication of the May (1941) "Considerations on the Strategic Deployment Plan". Perhaps this was due to the fact that this document was published before all the others (in the 1st - 2nd issues of the Military History Journal for 1992). Perhaps the public, which had not yet had time to wean itself from the traditional myths of Soviet pseudo-historical propaganda, was shocked by the phrase: *"I consider it necessary in no case to give the initiative to act to the German Command, to preempt the enemy and attack the German army at the moment when it will be in the deployment stage and not will still have time to organize the front and the interaction of the armed forces.* The idea is reasonable, but at the same time quite obvious and by no means new for the Soviet military leadership. So, back in April 1939, K. A. Meretskov (at that time the commander of the troops of the Leningrad Military District), speaking at the analysis of the command post game held by the Military Council of the district, said: *"At the moment when our opponents will mobilize their armies, will take their troops to our borders, we will not sit and wait. Our operational training, the training of troops must be directed in such a way as to ensure in fact the complete defeat of the enemy already at a time when he has not yet had time to gather all his forces ... "*

Nevertheless, the May "Considerations" - completely repeating all previous versions of the strategic deployment plan in terms of goals, tasks, directions of the main attacks, deadlines and milestones - do contain some new moment. This new point is expressed in the phrase preceding the sentence *"preempt the enemy."* Namely: *"Germany has the ability to warn us in the deployment and deliver a surprise strike."* In all other known variants of the plan for the strategic deployment of the Red Army, there is no such phrase in content. Of course, this is not about the "more aggressiveness" of the May "Considerations" - the need to get ahead of the enemy and "under no circumstances give him the initiative to act" is only an elementary requirement of common sense. The novelty lies in the fact that **in May 1941 the Soviet command was no longer so sure**

that he will be able to do this, and therefore persistently invites Stalin to immediately take the necessary measures, "without which it is impossible to deliver a surprise attack on the enemy both from the air and on the ground." All this suggests that by mid-May 1941, the Soviet military leadership had already clearly understood that a German attack on the USSR was possible, and this attack was possible even BEFORE Hitler ended the war against the British Empire victoriously. From the realization of this fact **came the decision to change (that is, to bring closer!) The timing of delivering their own strike against the German troops.** On May 24, 1941, many hours of

meeting, the participants of which, in addition to Stalin himself, were:

- Deputy Prime Minister and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Molotov;

- People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko;
- Chief of the General Staff Zhukov and his first Deputy, Head of the Operational Directorate, Vatutin;

- Head of the Main Directorate of the Red Army Air Force Zhigarev; - commanders of the troops of the five western border districts, members of the Military Councils (commissars) and commanders of the Air Force of these

districts. All the military left the "Master's" office at 21.20. Only Molotov remained, and five minutes later, at 21.25, an official of a very modest (and in comparison with the above) rank entered the office: the 1st secretary of the Soviet embassy in Bulgaria, Comrade Lavrishchev, who spent 55 minutes in the company of two top leaders of the state! How do we know this? At the

beginning of "perestroika", in 1990, the journal "Izvestia of the Central Committee of the CPSU" had the imprudence to publish a multi-page "Journal of records of persons accepted by Comrade. Stalin", in which, day after day, year after year, everyone who entered and left the leader's office was recorded. In that year, the Central Committee of the CPSU did a lot of things without thinking ... Only thanks to this "Journal of Recording Faces" did the very fact of the Meeting on May 24, 1941 become known, as well as the fact that there were no other such representative meetings of the top military-political leadership of the USSR was neither a few months before May 24, nor after this date until the outbreak of war. Here,

in fact, the whole "array of information". Nothing more is known to this day. Neither Soviet nor post-Soviet official historiography uttered a word about the subject of discussion and the decisions taken on May 24. Nothing was reported in their memoirs by the few participants in the Conference who survived to see Stalin's death. The compilers of the "robin" report in the preface to this two-volume collection that from 10,000 declassified documents they selected "600 of the most important and interesting." Alas, the minutes of the Meeting on May 24, 1941, or at least some mention of the decisions taken then, were not included in the list of "most important and interesting" ones. Declassified already at the beginning of the 21st century, the Special Folders of the minutes of the meetings of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks for May 1941 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 34–35) also do not contain even the slightest mention of this Meeting. And only Vasilevsky, in his article, which had lain in archival silence for almost 27 years, recalls: "A few weeks before the attack on us by fascist Germany, unfortunately I can't name the exact date, all the documentation on the district operational plans was handed over by the General Staff to the command and headquarters of the respective military districts. (43) No less remarkable is the list of those persons who There was no meeting on May 24, 1941. Not invited:

- Chairman of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR

- Marshal Voroshilov; - Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Marshals Budyonny, Kulik and Shaposhnikov, General of the Army

- Meretskov; - Head of the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army Zaporozhets; - People's

- Commissar of the Navy N. Kuznetsov;

- People's Commissar of Internal Affairs L.

- Beria; - Secretaries of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Zhdanov and Malenkov, who oversaw military issues along the party line and were members of the Main Military Council.

So what conclusions can we draw from the scraps of information we have? On May 24, 1941, a meeting of the top military-political leadership of the country was held. Issues of the highest degree of secrecy were discussed. The composition of the Conference participants is rather strange: there are no marshals occupying high and

loud by the name of the position, lieutenant generals from the districts are present. If the usual "duty event" had taken place in Stalin's office, something like a discussion of the results of combat training of troops and plans for exercises for the summer period, then the composition of the participants would have been different. It remains to be assumed that Vasilevsky's memory did not fail him, and May 24 was just the day when "all the documentation on the district operational plans was transferred by the General Staff to the command and headquarters of the corresponding military districts." If this is so, then the selection of participants in the Conference also becomes completely understandable: only those who developed the latest version of the operational plan for the war, and to whom this plan was reported (Stalin, Molotov, Timoshenko, Zhukov, Vatutin), as well as those direct executors to whom this plan is to be carried out. Party and military bosses with huge stars and stripes do not need this top-secret information yet, so they were not allowed to participate in the Meeting. The appearance in Stalin's office of the modest comrade Lavrishchev is also not accidental. As far as can be judged from all available options for the strategic deployment plan of the Red Army, the main blow was to be delivered in southern Poland, followed by a turn of the offensive axis to the south, through Hungary to the Balkans. This is probably why, having discussed the main, i.e., military, issues, Stalin and Molotov heard information about the political situation in the future theater of operations, reported by a "diplomat" (most likely the head of the intelligence residency in the Balkans). If this

assumption is correct and at the Meeting on May 24, 1941, the version of the operational plan approved by Stalin was brought to the attention of the commanders of the districts (i.e., to the future commanders of the fronts), then the "range of possible dates" for the planned start of the war narrows to almost two months: **OT BEGINNING OF JULY TO THE END OF AUGUST 1941** Let us briefly explain this rather obvious

conclusion. If the invasion of Europe was still planned to begin in 1942, then in May 41 this top-secret information would not have been reported to the district commanders. Early. Dangerous - the possibility of information leakage increases. And it makes no sense: in 8-9 months the situation can change many times over. Not only by 12,

but even by June 22, 1941, the strategic deployment was still very far from completion. In particular, open mobilization was not launched, without which the entire complex of strategic deployment activities was impossible in principle. And the next day after the announcement of mobilization, a large-scale offensive will not be launched. So, in the September (1940) version of the strategic deployment plan, we read: "Provided that the railways are working in full accordance with the plan for transporting troops, the day of transition to a general offensive should be set on the 25th day from the start of mobilization, i.e. 20- th day from the beginning of the concentration of troops. A similar period (20 days) required for "the concentration of troops and before they go on the offensive" is also indicated in the December (1940) plan of the headquarters of the Kyiv OVO. True, in June 1941, within the framework of covert mobilization, it was possible to complete a number of important stages of mobilization and strategic deployment (this will be discussed in the next chapter), but it was impossible to complete everything without declaring open mobilization. Consequently, the date of June 12 named by M. A. Gareev (if this information is generally reliable) reflects only one of the preliminary stages in the development of the war plan. The real date for the start of the offensive, set on May 24, **could not have been earlier than the beginning of July.**

It is worth comparing the situation in Moscow with the chronological preparations for the invasion on the other side of the future front. In Directive No. 21 (Plan Barbarossa), Hitler promised his generals: *"I will give the order for the strategic deployment of armed forces against the Soviet Union, if necessary, eight weeks before the scheduled start date of the operation."* Eight weeks. This promise, like many others, Hitler fulfilled - the day the operation began (June 22) was set and brought to the attention of the Wehrmacht High Command on April 30, 1941. Count eight weeks from the date of May 24, we find ourselves on July 19 - a completely realistic date completion of all measures for the strategic and mobilization deployment of the Red Army. On the other hand, in southern Poland, autumn and winter also

happen - damp, slushy, with rain, fog and sleet. For the actions of aviation and motorized troops, this is much worse than the "normal" Russian winter with severe frosts, which turns everything

"directions" into a continuous paved road and covers all rivers and lakes with an icy "pontoon bridge". The planned duration of the solution of the "first strategic task" was, as noted above, 25-30 days. But not everything in the war goes according to plan, and the first task must be followed by the next. Thus, **the end of August - the beginning of September can be considered the deadline** after which it would be too risky to launch a large-scale offensive in southern Poland and the Balkans.

The numerous gestures of demonstrative loyalty to Germany, which were mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, can also serve as an indirect confirmation of the hypothesis that the moment of the outbreak of the war set by Stalin fell on July-August 1941. As is known. in Soviet and post-Soviet historiography, the version was widely circulated that Molotov was instructed by diplomatic means to "postpone the German attack" until the autumn of 1941. It is quite possible that such a task was indeed set - but by no means in order to "win another year to strengthen the country's defense capability." The real task of the "appeasement policy" was to lull Hitler's vigilance so that in the summer of 1941 the Red Army could suddenly deliver a crushing first blow to the Wehrmacht.

The authors of the collective monograph "1941 - Lessons and Conclusions" in an indirect form and veiled by ordinary demagoguery also name mid-July 1941 as the date by which the strategic deployment of the Red Army was to be completed: "In the real situation of that time, the commanders of formations and army *commanders and the troops of the districts proceeded from other* (other in relation to June 22. - M.S.) *terms for the concentration and deployment of troops, the preparation of fronts, artillery firing positions, camouflage of airfields, warehouses, etc. It was believed that an enemy attack could **not** occur **before the first half of July.*** (3, p. 88) July-August 1941 and many of the captured

commanders of the Red Army were named as the expected date for the start of the war. Of course, the circle of persons admitted to a military secret of such importance as the exact date of a surprise attack was extremely

limited, so the testimony below can rather serve as a reflection of the general mood, the "general spirit" that soared in the Red Army in the summer of 1941. So, the military doctor Kotlyarevsky, who was called up on May 30, 1941 for a 45-day "training camp" to the medical battalion of the 147th Infantry Division, said that "On June 7, the medical personnel were confidentially informed that after 45 days there would be no dismissal, since *in the near future there will be war with Germany*. Captain Krasko, adjutant commander of the 661st regiment of the 200th rifle division, testified: *"Back in May 1941, the opinion was expressed among the officers that the war would begin after July 1."*

According to Major Koskov, commander of the 25th regiment of the 44th rifle division, *"judging by the scale and intensity of the preparations for the war, the Russians would have attacked Germany in a maximum of 2-3 weeks"* (after June 22. - M.S.). Colonel Gaevsky, commander of a regiment of the 29th Panzer Division (in the documents of the 29th Tank Division there is no mention of a colonel with such a surname - M.S.), testified: *"Among the commanders, they talked a lot about the war between Germany and Russia. There was an opinion that the war would begin around July 15th.* Major Solovyov, chief of staff of the 445th regiment of the 140th rifle division: *"In principle, a conflict with Germany was expected after the harvest, around the end of August - the beginning of September. The hasty redeployment of troops to the western border can be explained by the fact that the time of the attack was moved back.* Lieutenant Colonel Lyapin, head of the operations department of the 1st Motor Rifle Division, stated that *"a Soviet attack was expected in the fall of 1941."* Major General Malyshev (before the war - senior lecturer, head of the course at the Academy of the General Staff, then chief of staff of the 19th Army of the Western Front, captured on October 11 in the Vyazemsky "cauldron", one of Vlasov's main associates, hanged on August 1, 1946) stated that *"Russia would have*

attacked in mid-August using about 350–360 divisions". (42. pp. 84-85) The testimonies given in enemy captivity, and even those who actively collaborated with the invaders, could raise great doubts if they were not confirmed by the most important evidence - the real course of the strategic deployment of the Red Army in May - June 1941.

Chapter 8 STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT

Having finished (for the time being) with all hypotheses, let us return again to military history, i.e., the exact science of figures, dates, documents. Let's start, as it should be in science, with terms and definitions. What exactly do the words "strategic deployment" that we encountered so often in the last chapter mean? In the language of military academies, the answer to this question sounds something like this: *"A strategic deployment is understood as a set of measures and actions to transfer the Armed Forces from a peaceful position to a military one and create groupings of the Armed Forces in theaters of military operations."*

The most important components of the strategic deployments are:

- transfer of the Armed Forces from a peaceful position to a military one (mobilization deployment),
- operational deployment (creation and formation of groupings of troops in theaters of military operations), - *strategic regrouping of troops from the hinterland countries into theaters of war and between them,*
- Deployment of priority strategic reserves. Translated from academic language into human language, strategic deployment - in relation to the Red Army of the 1941 model of the year (and not in general to any other army in the world) - consisted in the following: - firstly, it is necessary to understaff the peacetime army with people and equipment to full-time standards wartime; - secondly, to immerse troops, equipment and ammunition in railway trains and take them to the western regions of the USSR;
- thirdly, to unload the soldiers, guns and tanks from the echelons and bring them to those areas where they must prepare for combat operations and wait for orders. The peculiarity of the strategic deployment of the Red Army consisted primarily of two points.

We have already discussed one of them in Chapter 2, but due to the exceptional significance of this, it is not a sin to repeat it: the number of divisions (regiments, brigades) of the Red Army, already during the pre-war covert mobilization, was almost completely brought up to the planned size of the wartime army. In the first three months after the announcement of open mobilization, it was planned to form only a very limited (30, i.e., about 15% of the original) number of rifle divisions. Shooting. All tank and motorized divisions, separate artillery regiments and brigades had already been formed in the course of a two-year covert mobilization (and were also kept in wartime states or the so-called "reinforced" states, which make up 80% of the wartime states). Thus, the mobilization deployment of the Red Army at the first stage was reduced only to **the additional staffing of existing units and formations** with personnel and horses, cars and tractors. The second feature of the strategic deployment of the land army of the Soviet Union was the huge

size of the country, due to which the volume and duration of rail transport were unusually large. The huge size of the country is an undoubted and very significant **advantage for the preparation and conduct of war**. German generals would be very happy if they could locate tank and artillery factories, chemical plants that produce explosives, and training centers that train soldiers and officers, several thousand kilometers from the border. But the geographical conditions of the country did not provide them with such luxury, so hundreds of thousands of bombs from the Anglo-American aircraft fell on all the industrial centers of Germany without exception. The fact that in the Soviet Union a train with tanks had to spend a week on the way from the plant in Chelyabinsk to the front is just a "feature" that should be taken into account when drawing up plans for strategic deployment, and not at all a "trouble" about which it is necessary to arrange another "lament of Yaroslavna" on the pages of historical books. In concrete terms, the situation was as follows. In the spring of 1941, 4.8 million people served in all the Armed Forces of the USSR (army, aviation, navy). In May-June, during the so-called "big

training camps "(this was not an improvisation, but an operation originally conceived and given this name in advance) was mobilized by personal agendas, without a public announcement of general mobilization, another 802 thousand people. Total: **5.6 million** people were put under arms before June 23, 1941. In total, after the complete mobilization of all military districts of the European part of the USSR (including the Ural and North Caucasian districts), the total number of armed forces according to the MP-41 plan should be **7.85 million**. (3, p. 83, 4, p. 643) By dividing one number by another, we get the so-called "deployment coefficient", that is, the scale factor for the growth of the army. In the USSR, it was very small, only 1.40. Or, in other words, the size of the army already in peacetime was 71% of the size of the wartime army. In other European countries, the size of the army after mobilization increased significantly. So, in Germany, by August 25, 1939 (five days before the start of the war), only 35% of wartime ground forces divisions were mobilized. In France, the size of the army has quadrupled since the beginning of mobilization; in impoverished Finland, which could not maintain a large army in peacetime, by 9 times.

Of course, the available human contingents were not evenly distributed. Of course, the troops of the western border districts were much better equipped than the troops of the rear of the Ural or Volga Military District. As early as May 21, 1940 (this is not a typo - exactly the fortieth year), by the Decree of the Politburo of the Central Committee No. 16/158, it was decided to maintain peacetime rifle divisions in the following numbers: 98 divisions of the western districts for 12 or more thousand people, 3 divisions - for 9 thousand and 43 divisions of internal districts - 6 thousand people each. (6, p. 617) A year later, in May-June 1941, 802 thousand people mobilized during the "big training camps" (BUS) were sent precisely to complete the units and formations of the western districts, as well as the armies advancing to the West second strategic echelon. ***"At the same time, the composition of the rifle divisions of the border districts, with a staffing strength of 14,483 people, was brought up: 21 divisions - up to 14 thousand people, 72 divisions - up to 12 thousand people and 6 rifle divisions - up to 11 thousand people."*** (3, p. 83)

I specifically quoted a complete quotation from the collective work of military histori

a year - lessons and conclusions "(1992), because there is hardly another fact in the history of the beginning of the war that would be misrepresented with such force and perseverance. An exemplary example of elegant shamelessness can be considered Zhukov's famous phrase, repeated in hundreds of publications: *"Our divisions, even 8,000 strong, are almost two times weaker than the German ones."* Well, isn't that adorable? There is nothing to object. The number 8 is practically (and even theoretically) half as much as 16. Zhukov can still be understood - he wrote his memoirs in an era when it was simply impossible to assume the possibility of declassifying authentic documents on the eve of the war. Another thing is strange: even in 2004, 700-page monographs were published in which the strength of the rifle divisions of the border districts was deliberately underestimated. (33)

It would be logical to compare the level of staffing of the Red Army divisions with the state of affairs in the enemy troops. Unfortunately, in the two decades spent reading military history literature, I have not been able to find a single figure characterizing the staffing of Wehrmacht divisions on the Eastern Front as of June 22, 1941. Of course, this is my flaw. I admit, but I dare to assume that it is not accidental either. The German generals and historians were not interested in the annoying search for at least some "good reasons" for the defeat - they had no defeats in the summer of 1941. The Soviet historians, who had access to the captured Wehrmacht documents, did not publish what they saw there, because for the German division, which had been fighting for the second year, the staffing of 85% of the regular strength was, most likely, an unattainable ideal ... Somehow none, but 85 is less than 100, and full staffing is undoubtedly better than "almost full." It took time to go from "almost full" to full-fledged "full". It remains only to find out the quantitative measure of this time: weeks, months, years? Refraining from further amateurish discussions, we will quote from the monograph of General Vladimirsky (in 1941 - Deputy Chief of the Operations Department of the Headquarters of the 5th Army of the Kiev Regional Military District), who knew almost everything about the mobilization readiness of his army on duty:

Mobilization plans in all rifle formations and units were worked out. They were systematically checked by higher headquarters, clarified and corrected ... Since May 20,

*1941, in order to retrain, all privates and sergeants of the reserve were involved in 45-day training camps with rifle divisions. This made it possible to increase the number of personnel of each rifle division to **12-12.5 thousand people**, or up to 85-90 percent of the wartime staff ...*

*... The envisaged procedure for mobilization basically boiled down to the following. Each part was divided into two mobilization echelons. The first mobilization echelon included 80-85 percent of the personnel of the unit ... **The deadline for the readiness of the first echelon** to set out on a campaign to complete a combat mission **was set at 6 hours** (emphasis mine. - M.S.). The second mobilization echelon of the unit included 15-20 percent of the personnel, as well as the entire reserve staff that arrived on mobilization. **The readiness deadline for the second echelon** was set: for formations stationed in the border zone, as well as for the air defense and air force forces - **no later than the first day of mobilization**, and for all other formations - **in a day ...** All formations and units were established areas **sheltered from***

***observation from the air** mobilization outside the points of their deployment, as well as the procedure for the exit of units into these areas and covering them during mobilization was determined. According to the conclusion of the commissions of the headquarters of the army and the district, which checked the state of mobilization readiness of rifle formations and units in May - June 1941, all rifle divisions and corps units were recognized as ready **for mobilization on time ...** " (28)*

Now let's take a breath and think about what we've read. The traditional version of Soviet historiography is known: the Red Army needed at least a whole year in order to "prepare for war." The Germans did not chivalrously wait and treacherously attacked the "peacefully sleeping country". In a slightly more refined version, these fables sounded like this: "The Wehrmacht's rapid advance inland disrupted the course of mobilization. This was the reason ... "In fact, **the mobilization**

the deployment of the Red Army was close to completion. The rifle divisions of the western districts (that is, the main backbone of the army of that era and, we note, the main force in the defense!) actually completed their mobilization, and the planned terms of their readiness for combat operations were no longer calculated in days, but in hours. A small "appendage" (the second mobilization echelon) was to be brought to full readiness in one or two days. With what speed was the "rapid advance of the Wehrmacht" to develop, in which the Red Army could be deprived of these few hours? Was the USSR similar in size to Luxembourg or Denmark, which the Wehrmacht was able to occupy in one day? Everything that we have listed

so far applies to rifle divisions. Simply put - to the infantry, the main weapons of which were a rifle and a machine gun. To remember how these items should be used, the reservist, who had previously served two (or three) years of active service, could very quickly. Really in a matter of hours. Technically complex types of troops (artillery, tanks, aviation), where a much larger set of knowledge and skills are required from personnel, were already in peacetime kept in states as close as possible to wartime states. Even before the implementation of the BUS in motorized and tank divisions, in the artillery regiments of the RGK, in anti-aircraft units, almost the entire combat strength was already there. Thus, the staffing table of a tank division, approved on July 6, 1940, assumed the presence of 10,493 people in peacetime and 11,343 in wartime. As you can see, the deployment factor is negligible - 1.08. With the announcement of mobilization, it was required to call only certain administrative, technical and service personnel. The same situation of mobilization readiness was in aviation and air defense units.

*"... The Air Force was in easier conditions for mobilization, since the flight personnel of the units were mainly kept in wartime states ... Therefore, **the terms of combat readiness of the air regiments were no more than 2-4 hours.** Airfield maintenance battalions and air bases were mobilized in two echelons. The first echelon had a readiness period corresponding to the terms of the serviced part, and the second was staffed on the 3rd-4th day of mobilization ...*

*... The mobilization of the air defense forces was also planned by echelon. The first echelon had **a constant combat readiness for up to 2 hours**. The second echelon had a readiness deadline **for the 1st - 2nd day** of*

*mobilization Thus, **out of 303 divisions that were to be mobilized according to the MP-41 plan, 172 divisions had full readiness terms on the 2nd - 4th day of mobilization, - 60 divisions - on the 4th - 5th day, - the rest - on 6 - 10th day**. All*

*remaining combat units, front-line rears and military educational institutions were mobilized on the 8th - 15th day. The full mobilization of the Armed Forces was envisaged for **15-30** days. (3, p. 79)*

Consideration of

the issue of mobilization deployment can also be approached from the other side. For the full staffing of 198 rifle, 13 cavalry, 61 tank, 31 motorized divisions, it is necessary to have about 4 million people. And by June 22, there were 5.6 million people in the Armed Forces of the USSR, of which 4.4 million people (79% of the total) were in the ground forces. At first glance - "there are already more people than necessary." Why call on another 2.25 million (7.85 - 5.6) people? Where to send them? Of course, these people are not at all superfluous for the army, although we were not mistaken in simple arithmetic. The thing is that the Armed Forces is a complex, multi-link, "multi-tiered" mechanism. The expression "put under arms" is just an established metaphor. Even on that "tier" that is directly facing the enemy, i.e., in the rifle division of the army in the field, not everyone carries out their service with a "gun in their hands." So, according to the April (1941) state in the rifle division there are: - 22 shoemakers (camping shoe repair shops); — 19 postmen (field post office); — 11 konovalov (separate

veterinary hospital); - 9 shepherds (horse drivers); - 11 pastors (department of political propaganda).

All these services and all these people are needed, although even without them the division can still fight through those 1-2-3 days that it needs to fully replenish. Number (absolute and

relative) of auxiliary, administrative, economic services is rapidly growing on other "tiers" of the military machine. Along with divisions and separate (mainly artillery and anti-aircraft) units, the active army also includes numerous transport, sanitary, road, repair and technical, supply services and subunits. For example, in 1941, in the operating army of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front, the total number of personnel (3.3 million people) was 1.5 times higher than the regular strength of all divisions allocated for operations on this front. But the active army is only a part of the Armed Forces. A huge number of people carry out their military service in the deepest rear. Thus, in the Soviet Union during the last two years of the war, the strength of the active army (about 6.5 million people) was **only 57-58% of the total number** of personnel of the Armed Forces. (2, pp. 138, 152) It was the auxiliary, sanitary, rear services - and not the divisions on the western border at all - that were the main "recipient" of the personnel arriving as part of open mobilization. We repeat again and again - there are no "extra parts" in the military machine. All of them are needed and created for a reason. However, the shortage of personnel in the tank training ground near Chelyabinsk or the artillery school in Tomsk hardly had any effect on the course and outcome of the border battle in Western Belarus.

Let's sum up the first result. There were no problems with staffing the army with personnel. In the combat units of the western districts, by June 22, 1941, this staffing was carried out to the extent that, without a doubt, made it possible to conduct organized combat operations. Much worse was the situation with the staffing of troops with vehicles and means of mechanized artillery. And there were at least two major reasons for this.

The first is Stalin's (and in a more general sense, eternally inherent in all Eastern despotisms) gigantomania. Gigantomania in everything: both in the number of simultaneously formed motorized formations (tank and motorized rifle divisions, anti-tank artillery brigades, heavy artillery regiments of the RGK), and in the huge, insanely inflated staffing standards for mechanized traction equipment (which we discussed in detail in Chapter 5). Maybe at that moment (in May

1941), when it was decided to postpone the invasion of Europe from the spring of 1942 to the end of the summer of 1941, it would be worthwhile to stop the formation of 20 new mechanized corps, and use all available resources to fully staff the nine already existing ones. Or maybe not - even a one-third-equipped mechanized corps was a shock tank formation, in most respects superior to a Wehrmacht tank division equipped "to the last button". This question is complex, and the answer to it requires special military knowledge. In any case, such a decision was not made, and the available equipment continued to be sprayed over a hundred motorized units. Secondly, covert mobilization - thanks to which the divisions of the western districts were almost completely manned - did little to equip the troops with vehicles. The resources of the Soviet Union (as, indeed, of any other country of that time) did not allow hundreds of thousands of cars and tens of thousands of tractors to be withdrawn from the national economy without very serious and, most importantly, noticeable consequences to the outside eye. Probably, the unwillingness to leave the collective farms without tractors before the completion of the main field work also played a role. As a result, the following situation has developed. In February 1941, the Red Army

already had **34,000 tractors (caterpillar tractors), 201,000 trucks and special vehicles, and 12,600 cars**. (4, p. 622) Which in itself is a lot. As noted above, this number of tractors already doubled the available number of heavy guns. But it was still far from full staffing according to the requirements of the MP-41 mobilization plan. On the other hand, in February 1941, the equipment of the Red Army with military equipment was by no means completed. The factories worked in three shifts, in 1940 the Soviet industry produced 32 thousand tractors of all types and purposes. The military order of 1941 was 13,150 tractors and tractors. (4, p. 617). The number of vehicles in the Red Army by June 1941 had grown to 273,000. (2, p. 363) Finally, on June 23, open mobilization was announced, and, despite all the chaos and confusion of the catastrophic start of the war, by July 1, 1941, another 31.5 thousand tractors were transferred from the national economy to the Red **Army and 234 thousand cars** (3, p. 115) On average for each

out of 303 Soviet divisions (of all types, in all districts), theoretically, there were **220 tractors and 1,670 vehicles each**. Average. This means that in the divisions of the western border districts of equipment there should have been twice as much equipment - mobilized cars and tractors were not sent to the Siberian district ... But

domestic military historians can't stop their lamentations: "Little ... few ... few ... Blatant unpreparedness ... The absence of the required means of mechanical traction ... in the Urals Military District, the mobilization need was met by means of mechanical traction only from 9 to 45% ... "(3) A terrible thing. You read this and the reason for the unprecedented defeat immediately becomes clear: there were not enough tractors beyond the Urals. Now let's convert percentages to units. Even 9% of the staff is 6 tractors in a howitzer regiment, located in the deepest rear, many thousands of kilometers from any border. Six tractors are enough for the driver mechanics to practice towing guns from morning to evening, and the gun crews of a full howitzer battery (4 guns) worked out the march and reaching firing positions. All the other guns of the regiment are where they are supposed to be: in a guarded warehouse, lubricated with oil. Why carry them around? Well, 45% of the state is already 32 tractors. In this form, the regiment can be loaded onto railway platforms and sent from beyond the Urals to the front. Four "horseless" howitzers will not be superfluous - they can, for example, be used as a reserve to immediately replenish losses. A 122-mm howitzer (whose weight roughly corresponds to the weight of a Volga car) could well be towed by a ZIS-5 truck, and light tanks from the reconnaissance battalion of a rifle division could also be used as a tractor. Nevertheless, in this case, Soviet historians are absolutely right.

Even after the open mobilization, the Red Army did not receive the prescribed amount of mechanized traction equipment. According to the MP-41 mobilization plan, the Red Army needed **90.8 thousand tractors and 595 thousand cars**. This quantity was not available. The shortfall in both cars and tractors amounted to almost 28% of the mobilization requirement. Needs, twice the standard norms, which, in turn, imply a double redundancy of mechanical traction. Traditional

version, it was this "blatant unpreparedness for war" that led in the summer of 41 to astronomical losses in the material part of the artillery.

Mobilization deployment (mobilization) is an important, but not the only component of the entire deployment complex. strategic, three other tasks were interrelated Consider now, How carried out (strategic regrouping of troops from the interior regions of the country to theaters of military operations, the creation and formation of groupings of troops in theaters of military operations, and the deployment of priority strategic reserves).

The last of the known pre-war documents - the certificate "On the deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR in the event of a war in the West", signed by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army N. Vatutin on June 13, 1941 - provided for the following distribution of ground forces: (TsAMO, f. 16A, op 2951, d. 236, l. 65-69) - 186 divisions (out of

303), 10 (out of 10) anti-tank artillery brigades, 5 (out of 5) airborne corps, 53 (out of 74) artillery regiment of the RGK as part of the active fronts; - 51 divisions consisting of five (22, 19, 16,

24, 28) armies of the reserve of the High Command, deployed in the strip from the western border to the Bryansk-Rzhev line;

- 31 divisions in the Far East (as part of the troops of the Trans-Baikal VO and the Far Eastern Front);

- 35 divisions "on secondary sections of the state border" (so in the text. - *M.S.*) , including 3 divisions in the Crimea.

Of the 186 divisions included in the fronts operating in the West, 100 (more than half) are deployed in Ukraine, Moldova and the Crimea. Half of all tank (20 out of 40) and motorized (10 out of 20) divisions included in the active fronts should also be concentrated there. Of the 51 divisions of the reserve of the Civil Code, 23 are concentrated directly behind the Southwestern Front (Kiev OVO). (6, pp. 358–361) any strategic

suddenness" of the war that began on June 22, 1941. The Red Army was waiting for war, preparing for war. and this preparation took on the character of a large-scale strategic regrouping. The location of the groupings being created forces. is clearly not accidental. The huge concentration of forces in the western direction is quite obvious, and within this direction - in the southern (Ukrainian) theater of operations. The document does not yet give grounds for assuming the direction - offensive or defensive - of this concentration, but the very fact of the existence of a certain Big Plan, for the implementation of which such a grouping is built, is beyond doubt.

calls.

The certificate, signed by Vatutin on June 13, 1941, does not contain a single mention of the tasks and action plans of the troops. Only numbers, numbers of armies, stations for unloading troops, the required number of wagons and echelons. But we have the opportunity to compare the actual deployment of June 1941 with the known variants of the operational plan. For example, with the May (1941) "Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies", the unambiguously offensive nature of which was discussed in the previous chapter. Somewhat violating the chronological order of presentation, we will immediately cite the actual position of the Red Army troops as of June 22, 1941.

	«Соображения», май 41 г.	«Справка» от 13.06.	Фактическое сосредоточение на 22 июня 41 г.
Северный Фронт	три армии, 21/4/2	- 22/4/2	14-я, 7-я, 23-я армии, 21/4/2
Северо-Западный фронт	три армии, 23/4/2	- 23/4/2	27-я, 8-я, 11-я армии, 25/4/2
Западный фронт	четыре армии, 45/8/4	- 44/12/6	3-я, 10-я, 4-я, 13-я армии, 44/12/6
Юго-Западный фронт	восемь армий, 122/28/15	- 100/20/10	5-я, 6-я, 26-я, 12-я, 18-я, 9-я армии, 80/20/10
Армий резерва ГК	пять армий, 47/12/8	пять армий, 5/11/5	22-я, 20-я, 21-я, 19-я, 16-я, 24-я, 28-я армии, 17/5/2

Notes: - the

first digit is the total number of divisions, the second digit - including tank divisions, the third - including motorized ones; - On June

21, the troops deployed in the southern theater of operations were divided into two fronts: South-Western and Southern, the table shows the total number of divisions in two fronts and in the Crimea; -

according to the cover plan, with the start of hostilities, two divisions of the S. F., deployed in Estonia, were transferred to the S. F., but in the table

it is not reflected

It is easy to verify that the actual concentration of troops in the western regions of the USSR took place in direct accordance with the May "Considerations on the Strategic Deployment Plan". In three districts (Leningrad, Baltic, Western), which turned into the Northern, North-Western and Western Fronts, respectively, the coincidence of the May plan and the June fact is almost exact. The difference in 4 tank and 2 motorized divisions, that is, the apparent increase in the grouping of the Western Front by two mechanized corps, is most likely the result of a purely clerical operation. No new mechanized corps appeared in Belarus, just the emerging 17th MK and 20 MK, not taken into account in the May "Considerations", were included in the general list according to the Information of June 13. A much greater discrepancy is observed in the south, although even there the changes took place mainly on paper, and not on the ground. The main strike force of the Southwestern Front was created not by weakening the other three fronts, but by redeploying 20 divisions from the Kharkov, Oryol and Volga districts to the Kiev OVO. However, in the second half of June, another redistribution of forces between the First and Second strategic echelons was carried out. The troops of the internal districts were not organizationally transferred to the Kyiv OVO (South-Western Front), but were used to deploy reserve armies (Second Strategic Echelon). Thus, two new armies appeared, which were not taken into account in the Certificate of June 13: the 20th and 21st. The total number of divisions in the armies of the Civil Code reserve increased from 51 to 77, but the grouping of the first strategic echelon in the southern theater of operations (South Western and Southern Fronts) turned out to be 20 rifle divisions less than expected on June 13, 1941. Nevertheless, the concentration of forces in the southern direction remained just as pronounced: three reserve armies were now deployed in the rear of the Southwestern Front (the 16th in the Proskurov-Shepetovka region, the 19th in the Cherkassy region, and the 21st in the Chernigov region).

Much more significant is not this paper redistribution of the same corps and divisions from one army to another, but the actual course of the strategic

regrouping of troops from the interior of the country to the theater of future military operations. June 22, he was still far from complete. Of the 77 divisions of the second strategic echelon, no more than 17–20 divisions arrived in the planned operational deployment areas. *“The total volume of transportation of military formations was 939 railway echelons. The protracted advance of troops and the late periods of concentration were determined by camouflage measures and the maintenance of the peacetime railway operation regime. By the beginning of the war, only 83 military echelons arrived at their designated points. 455 were on the way...”* (3 , p. 84) . For the multimillion-strong armies of the first half of the 20th century, railways became the most important type of weapon, which largely determined the outcome of the main battles of the two world wars. Accordingly, all countries (especially those with such large armed forces as Germany and the USSR) had plans developed back in peacetime for the transfer of railway traffic to the “maximum military traffic” mode. The meaning of the term and the process is quite clear: all trains, cargo and passengers stand and wait until the echelons with troops, equipment and ammunition proceed in the direction they need. In addition, mobilization stocks of coal, steam locomotives, and wagons are being cleared, and the armed protection of railway stations and stages is being strengthened. The schedule of military transportation in the European part of the USSR was introduced (September 12, 1939) even at the stage of the strategic deployment of the Red Army before the war with a dilapidated invasion of the Wehrmacht by Poland. (1, p. 110) However, nothing of the kind was done in June 1941!

According to the calculations contained in the pre-war plans of the Soviet command, the enemy (the Germans) needed from 10 to 15 days, and the Red Army - from 8 days for the Northern to 30 days for the South-Western fronts, necessary for the implementation of all transportation according to the plans for the strategic deployment of troops. In fact, both sides (Germany and the USSR) did not speed up, but, on the contrary, dragged out the terms for the concentration of troops. They dragged it out with a completely understandable, mutual goal - not to scare the enemy ahead of time.

It is difficult to say which event should be considered the beginning of the concentration of German troops near the borders of the USSR (the first divisions of the Wehrmacht were transferred to the East almost immediately after the end of the fighting in France), but in any case, the strategic deployment for Operation Barbarossa was stretched for at least four months. The redeployment plan was divided into five stages, and in the early stages only infantry units were advanced to the borders of the USSR. At the beginning of April 1941, the grouping of German troops in the East consisted of only 43 infantry and 3 tank divisions, and although Soviet intelligence in their reports traditionally overestimated this number by almost half (to 70 infantry, 7 tank and 6 motorized), such a "concentration" did not give there is no reason to assume that the Wehrmacht will soon invade.

By mid-May, the German grouping had increased by 23 infantry and 1 motorized divisions. (1, pp. 304–305) This fact was also revealed by Soviet intelligence, but it still fit into the version spread by the Nazi secret services about the "minimal precautions" taken in relation to a very unreliable "partner" in the division of Europe. As noted above, the date of the invasion (June 22, 1941) was set by Hitler on April 30, at the same time it was decided to transfer the railways to the maximum military traffic schedule from May 23. But even after that, with the transfer of tank and motorized divisions clearly unmasking the whole plan of the operation, they dragged on, as they say, until the last minute. So, for example, five tank divisions of Army Group South were loaded into echelons from June 6 to 16 and arrived at unloading stations in southern Poland (Lublin - Sandomierz - Rzeszow) only by June 14-20. Three divisions (13th TD, 14th TD and 11th TD) went directly to the areas of concentration and deployment 25–40 km from the Soviet border literally in the last hours before the invasion, and the other two (16th TD and 9 -i td) on the evening of June 21 were still on the march 100-150 km from the border. (33, pp. 37, 108)

There is nothing surprising in the fact that by Sunday morning, June 22, 1941, the concentration of the Soviet armies of the second strategic echelon had not yet been completed. The Red Army command acted according to its own deployment schedule, which did not involve a German invasion.

"The transfer of troops was planned with the expectation of completing the concentration in the areas outlined by the operational plans from June 1 to July 10, 1941." For this phrase alone, the authors of the collective monograph "1941 - Lessons and Conclusions" should have been awarded

the medal "For Courage" at the same time, in 1992 ... The units of the 16th Army and 5th Army located in

Transbaikalia and Mongolia go MK. On April 26, the General Staff issued a preliminary order to the Military Councils of the Trans-Baikal and Far Eastern Military Districts. On May 22, the loading of the first units into echelons began, which, taking into account the vast distance and the ongoing work schedule of peacetime railways, were supposed to arrive in the Berdichev-Proskurov-Shepetovka region from June 17 to July 10. From May 13 to May 22, orders were received from the General Staff on the start of the advancement of two more armies of the Civil Code reserve to the western border. The 22nd Army was advancing to the Velikiye Luki-Vitebsk region with a concentration deadline of **July 1-3**, the 21st Army was concentrating in the Chernigov-Gomel-Konotop region **by July 2**. On May 29, a decision was made to form the 19th Army and deploy it in the Cherkasy-Bila Tserkva region **by July 7**. Not earlier than June 13, a decision was made to form another, 20th Army, on the basis of the formations of the Orlovsky and Moscow Military Districts, which was supposed to concentrate at Smolensk **by July 3-5**. Let us repeat once again that all these transportations were planned to be carried out under the condition of *"preserving the mode of operation of the railways in peacetime"* and in compliance with absolutely unprecedented measures of the strictest secrecy. So, on June 12, 1941, the People's Commissar of Defense, by Directive No. 504206, gave the following instructions to the commander of the Kiev OVO: *"No one should know about the arrival of units of the 16th Army, except for you, a member of the Military Council and the chief of staff of the district ... Open conversations on the phone and on telegraph, connected with the arrival, unloading and disposition of troops, even without the name of the*

units, I categorically forbid ... Use the code name in all correspondence, including on envelopes of top secret documents. (6, p. 352) should not pass by our attention and adopted on June 4, 1941 at a meeting

creation within the Red Army of one rifle division, manned by personnel of Polish nationality and knowing the Polish language. (48) The national formations in the Red Army had long since been eliminated by that time. In addition, the decision of the Politburo is not just about people of Polish origin, but about people who know the Polish language (which, in the specific conditions of the multinational Soviet Union, with a large number of mixed marriages and assimilated national groups, was not at all the same thing) . The only similar incident took place on November 11, 1939. Then, 20 days before the start of the planned "liberation" of Finland, it was decided to form the 106th Infantry Division, the personnel of which was selected exclusively from people who spoke Finnish or Karelian. (49, p. 137) The furious detractors of V. Suvorov's version have exhausted a bottomless abyss of paper on their waste products, on all these "anti-Suvorov", "icebreaker myths", etc., but have not yet bothered to answer a simple question: why did Stalin needed by July 1, 1941, a division that speaks Polish? Did the Poles urgently need to defend the inviolable borders of the USSR? A wave of large-scale regrouping of troops rolled from the far Far East through the military districts of the European part of the USSR to the border

western districts. In mid-June, the turn came for such measures, which were the most difficult to hide from enemy reconnaissance - the consolidation of the operational formation of the troops of the First Strategic Echelon began. In the period from June 12 to 15, the command of the western border districts received orders to advance divisions of the district (front) reserve closer to the state border. So, in the directive of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 504205 dated June 13, 1941, sent to the Kiev OVO, it was stated: "*In order to increase the combat readiness of the troops of the district, by **July 1** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) all deep divisions with corps directorates, move with corps units closer to the state border to new camps ... Keep the movements of troops in complete secrecy. To make a march with tactical exercises, at night. With the troops to withdraw fully transportable supplies*

firearms and fuels and lubricants. Do not take families. Execution to be delivered by courier by July 1, 1941. (6, p. 359)

The order was immediately accepted for execution. Here is how Marshal Bagramyan describes these events in his memoirs (at that time he was the head of the operational department, deputy chief of staff of the Kiev Regional

Military District): “ ... On June 15, we received an order to start moving all five rifle corps of the second echelon to the border from June 17. We already **had everything prepared** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) for this: **back in early May, by order of Moscow, we** carried out significant work - we prepared directives for the corps, carried out reconnaissance of movement routes and areas of concentration. Now it only remained to give a command to the performers ... The divisions took with them everything necessary for combat operations. **For the purpose of secrecy, the troops were supposed to move only at night.** The plan was worked out in detail... So that the Nazis would not notice our movements, the areas where the corps were concentrated were not chosen near the border itself, but several daily

marches to the east. (45. p. 75) A directive of similar content and indicating the same date for the completion of concentration - by July 1 - was also received by the Western OVO. (6. p. 423) By June 15, more than half of the divisions that made up the second echelon and reserve of the western military districts were set in motion. On the eve of the war, 32 divisions of the western districts secretly, by night crossings, through forests and swamps walked (sneaked) to the border. Colonel Novichkov, who at the beginning of the war was the chief of staff of the 62nd Infantry Division of the 5th Army of the Kiev OVO, recalls: “ *Parts of the division set out from the camp in Kivertsy (about 80 km from the border. - M.S.) and, having made two night crossings, by the morning of June 19, they entered the defense zone, however, **they did not***

occupy the defensive line, but concentrated in the forests

(emphasized by me. - M.S.) *near it.* (46) On June 15, the commander of the troops of the Baltic OVO, Colonel General F. I. Kuznetsov, issued order No. 0052, in which he reminded his subordinates that “it is today, more than ever, that we must *be in full combat readiness ... Everyone must firmly and clearly understand this, because at any moment we must be ready*

Order No. 0052 contained no specific operational tasks; it was topped with the stamp "Top Secret. Of particular importance", was brought to the attention of only the senior command staff (from division commanders and above) and ended with the following instruction: *"In the development of this order, do not give written orders and orders to anyone."* Concern about the "goals of secrecy" reached the point that the head of the political propaganda department of the Baltic OVO, Comrade Ryabchiy, on the evening of June 21, 1941, ordered *"not to give written directives to the departments of political propaganda of the corps and divisions, but to set the tasks of political work orally through their representatives ..."*.

(46) All this is strange, very strange. Of course, the Soviet norms of secrecy were very different from the universal ones, but was it really impossible to entrust paper with such tasks as "to be ready to protect the peaceful labor of the Soviet people" or "we don't want an inch of foreign land"? In this regard, it is worth noting that on the very first day of the war, June 22, 1941, the Germans seized a warehouse in the town of Sakiai (Lithuania) with leaflets in German addressed to Wehrmacht soldiers. (42, p

The most amazing thing is the other. To this day, there are still writers who claim that Stalin tried his best to "delay Hitler's attack" on the Soviet Union. So after all, in order to "pull" better, it was necessary not to hide the divisions in the forests, not to wander through the swamps at night, but on a bright sunny June day to call the correspondents of all the central newspapers to the same Kivertsy and order them to remove the marching columns. And on the front page of the newspaper - under the general heading "The border is locked!". And next to it is an interview with the tank commander, who arrived with his comrades from the hot steppes of Mongolia to Shepetovka. And let the German analysts think - what would it be for ... *"When dealing with a dangerous enemy, you should probably show him, first of all, your readiness to fight back. If we had demonstrated our true power to Hitler, he might have refrained from going to war with the USSR at that moment,"* writes General of the Army S.P. Ivanov, a highly experienced staff officer, in his memoirs. (47) Exactly as advised by a military professional of such a high level, and it was necessary to act - if Stalin thought about it. how to "pull back", and not about how **NOT to FEAR** the enemy in the weeks and days remaining before the invasion of Europe.

The last doubts about the offensive direction of the Grand Plan disappear, as soon as we put on the geographical map the location of the divisions of the first strategic echelon, which was created during the secret months-long strategic deployment. Thanks to the prudently drawn in September 1939 "the line of delimitation of the state interests of the USSR and Germany on the territory of the former Polish state" (this was the official name for what is called the "western border" in all books and textbooks), this "border" had two deep (on 120–170 km) ledges, facing the "point" to the West. Belostok ledge in Western Belarus and Lvov ledge in Western Ukraine. Two protrusions are inevitably accompanied by four "hollows". From north to south, these "depressions" at the bases of the ledges were located in the areas of the cities of Grodno, Brest, Vladimir-Volynsky, Chernivtsi. If the Red Army were going to stand on the defensive, then only minimal covering forces would be left on the "points of the ledges", and the main defensive groupings would be built at the base, in the "hollows". Such formation makes it possible to avoid the encirclement of friendly troops on the territory of the ledges, to reduce the total length of the defense front (the length of the base of the triangle is always shorter than the sum of the other two sides), and to create the highest operational density in the most probable directions of the enemy offensive.

In June 1941, everything was done exactly the opposite. The main shock formations "huddled together" on the tips of the Bialystok and Lvov ledges. At the bases of the ledges, in the region of Grodno, Brest and Chernivtsi, incomparably weaker forces were located. The description of the entire grouping will take us too much time and space, so we confine ourselves to considering the deployment of the main strike force of the Red Army - mechanized (tank) corps. The extreme haste and difference in timing of the beginning of their formation led to the fact that the available tanks, armored vehicles, cars and tractors were distributed very unevenly among the mechanized corps. The composition of the tank fleet was just as heterogeneous. Most of the corps of the latest tanks (T-34, KV) did not exist at all, some (10th MK, 19th MK, 18th MK) were armed with extremely worn out BT-2 / BT-5, produced in 1932-1934 years,

or even light floating wedges T-37 / T-38. Against this background, the "five heroes", five mechanized corps, which are armed with from 700 to 1,000 tanks, including more than 100 of the latest T-34 and KV tanks, hundreds of tractors (tractors), thousands of cars, stand out in contrast. These are (listing from north to south) 3rd MK, 6th MK, 15th MK, 4th MK and 8th MK. Even among these, the best of the best, the 6th and 4th mechanized corps are noticeable. They were armed with 452 and 414 of the latest tanks, respectively - more than in all the other (and there were 27 "others") mechanized corps of the Red Army combined. By the beginning of hostilities, the 6th MK had 1,131 tanks (i.e., even more than the standard norm), 294 tractors (an honorary "second place" among all mechanized corps of the Red Army), and in terms of the number of cars and motorcycles (4,779 and 1,042 respectively) it also outnumbered any other mechanized corps of the Red Army. It looked very solid before the start of the war and the 8th MK. The corps was armed with 171 newest T-34s and KVs, 359 tractors

and tractors, and 3,237 vehicles. Where were these "heroes"? The 4th MK was deployed in the Lvov area. Next to it, a little to the south, the 8th MK was stationed, a little east of Lvov, in the Zolochiv-Kremenets region, was the 15th MK. Only in these three mechanized corps, there were 721 KV and T-34 tanks, which, by a strange coincidence, almost exactly equaled the total number of tanks of all types in the Wehrmacht's 1st Panzer Group opposing them. Before firing a single shot, the strike force of the Soviet mechanized corps was already hanging over the flank and rear of the German troops, sandwiched between the Vistula and Buta rivers. Two days before the start of the war, all three divisions of the 4th MK began to move west, to the very "edge" of the Lvov salient. On the morning of June 22 (at 5:40 a.m.), the command of the 8th MK opened the "red package", and in accordance with the order of the commander of the 26th Army No. 002 of May 17, 1941 (63, p. 165), the mechanized corps moved to the west and in the afternoon went to the border river San west of Sambir. The "Red Package" with the directive of the headquarters of the Kiev OVO No. 0013 dated May 31, 1941 (70, p. 197) was opened by the commander of the 15th MK at 0445, after which the divisions of the corps moved towards Radekhov (34 km from the border Krystynopol, now Chervonograd). But perhaps the most revealing was the choice of the location of the 6th MK, which was hidden in the thicket of dense

the mechanized corps with its huge "farm" ended up in Bialystok - a railway line approaches this city through centuries-old forests and bottomless swamps. The corps could leave Bialystok on its own only in one direction - along the highway to Warsaw, to which only 80 km remained from the "border". The main road from Bialystok to the east, to Belarus, just as it did not exist then, does not exist to this day. No less remarkable

is the location of the 3rd MK (672 tanks, including 110 T-34s and KVs, 308 tractors and tractors, 3,897 vehicles). This corps was subordinate to the 11th Army, deployed in southern Lithuania, at the junction of the Northwestern and Western fronts. The border line in the area of this junction looked like a long and narrow "tongue", which, from the Polish city of Suwalki, went deep into Soviet territory in the Grodno region. In fact, on the territory of this "Suwalk ledge" and to the north, two Wehrmacht tank groups (4th and 3rd) were deployed at once, consisting of seven (!) Panzer divisions. The Soviet command might not have known about this, but the very outline of the border near Grodno inspired great fears. Nevertheless, the 3rd MK turned out to be much north of Grodno, even north of Kaunas, separated from the "Suwalk ledge" by the full-flowing Neman. A strange decision to repel a very likely enemy strike from Suwalki to Grodno, but very understandable and rational for an attack on Tilsit (Sovetsk) and further to the Baltic coast. But directly near Grodno there was a poorly equipped (331 tanks, including a total of 27 T-34s and KVs), with a meager amount of vehicles and tractors of the 11th MK. A little better (518 light T-26s, not a single medium and heavy tank) was armed with the 14th MK, which, at the southern base of the Bialystok ledge, in the Brest-Kobrin area, was hit by the 2nd tank group of Guderian. The distribution of individual (corps and RGK) artillery regiments was similar (the main forces were on the "edge of the ledge" facing the enemy). As part of the 3rd Army, covering the Grodno direction, there were only two corps artillery regiments (152nd and 444th), and as part of the 10th Army (the tip of the Bialystok ledge) - four corps (130th, 156th, 262nd, 315th) and three artillery regiments of the RGK (311th, 124th, 375th).

Strange as it may sound, but to prove the offensive orientation of Soviet operational plans and the conditional

these plans for building groupings of troops came to light only after the publication of the famous book by V. Suvorov "Icebreaker". Prior to this, Soviet historians and memoirists calmly and willingly stated that *"the offensive nature of the planned strategic actions influenced the location of positions and troops ... the plan for the strategic deployment and construction of operational groupings of troops to a greater extent reflected offensive goals ..."*. (3) True, such confessions were always accompanied by a proviso that "due to an incorrect assessment of the situation, it was unjustifiably admitted ...". V. Suvorov simply suggested that we stop considering Soviet generals idiots who do not understand the elementary foundations of strategy and operational art, and drew attention to the mental, and most importantly, moral, merits of Soviet historians. Of course, the "historians" did not forgive him for this. Strange, but the Soviet generals rehabilitated by V. Suvorov did not intercede for him either ...

Chapter

9 "OTHERS MAY WORRY"

Our people, as the whole world knows, are kind, long-suffering and quick-witted. To this day, none of the parties represented in the State Duma has thought to raise the issue of conducting a serious parliamentary investigation into the causes and circumstances of the greatest tragedy in Russia, which was the war that claimed the lives of millions of our fellow citizens. Nobody was judged. None of the big bosses who survived Stalin and Beria (Molotov, Voroshilov, Timoshenko, Zhukov, Golikov) were even interrogated. And what is most surprising is that all this no longer surprises anyone. But voluntary (and, I would like to believe, free) Stalin's lawyers appear every year more and more. With monkey squeals and mocking antics, we are told that during the years of the Great Terror "only" 681 thousand people were shot (and even during the "investigation" in prisons and camps, 115 thousand people died in two years), and therefore "crapcrats lie about millions of victims." Is 800 thousand in two years not enough? And did the extermination of their own people begin only in 1936? Or did it end at the end of 1938? Incredibly, even a "liberal-democratic" version of Stalin's plans appeared: he supposedly got together in the summer of 1941 to "liberate Europe from fascist barbarism." Yes, it didn't work out, yes, "history gave him little time," but what good eyes! And the plans are "purely liberating" (instead of "purely defensive" according to the old, Soviet version). Alas, I have to disappoint: no documents or facts

confirming Stalin's "liberation intentions" have yet been found. On the other hand, another obvious fact can be stated: on the eve of the start of the Great War, Comrade Stalin did not make the slightest attempt to improve his relations with Hitler's real opponents. Although, according to sound logic, it would have been necessary to start with this - if Stalin really was preparing for the "disinterested liberation" of enslaved Europe. Moreover, the rigidity (if not to say boorish arrogance) in relation to the warring Britain and its

overseas ally only increased. A detailed analysis of the foreign policy, diplomatic component of the events of the spring and summer of 1941 is far beyond the scope of this book. Without trying to embrace the immensity, let us nevertheless cite a few rather eloquent documents. The quotations will be very

lengthy, but otherwise it is impossible to understand the "tone and style" with which Stalin's diplomats communicated in the spring of 1941 with their future allies in the anti-Hitler coalition.

On April 18, 1941, British Ambassador to the USSR Stafford Cripps met with the Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Comrade A. Ya. This meeting had a very remarkable prehistory. After W. Churchill headed the British government in May 1940, he replaced the British ambassador to the USSR and sent to Moscow the most "leftist" person who was loyal to Soviet Russia, who was only in his "team" ("the *only once I was booed in parliament, it was my speech in favor of the Soviet Union,*" Cripps told Vyshinsky). On July 1, 1940, Cripps was able to get a meeting with Stalin (a rare honor in those days - for example, the ambassador of such a considerable country as the United States, Steingardt, was never received by Stalin) and gave him a personal message from Churchill. In that document, in particular, it was said:

"... In the past - in the most recent past - our relations, it must be admitted, were overshadowed by mutual suspicions; and last August the Soviet government decided that the interests of the Soviet Union required that it break off negotiations with us and enter into close relations with Germany. Thus, Germany became your friend almost at the same moment when she became our enemy... ...At the moment, the

whole of Europe, including both our countries, faces the problem of how the states and peoples of Europe will react to the prospect of Germany establishing hegemony over the continent ... We are better placed than other less favored countries to resist Germany's hegemony ambitions and, as you know, the British Government is determined to use with

to this end its geographical position and its great resources. In fact, British policy is focused on achieving two goals, namely, firstly, to save itself from the domination of Germany, which the Nazi government wants to establish, and, secondly, to free the rest of Europe from the domination that Germany is currently exerting over it. . The Soviet government is itself in a position to judge whether

the interests of the Soviet Union are threatened by Germany's present striving for hegemony over Europe and, if so, how best to ensure these interests. But I believe that the crisis that Europe and even the whole world is now experiencing is so serious that it gives me the right to sincerely state to you the state of affairs as it appears to the British Government ... "(4, p. 82)

Then, on July 1, 1940, Stalin took a rather ambiguous position: he did not express the slightest desire to help Britain in any way, he refused to recognize Hitler's aggression in Europe as dangerous for the USSR, but, in striking contrast to the then accepted newspaper rhetoric in the USSR, he did not begin to demonstrate his friendly relations with Germany. Thus, the door to possible cooperation between England and the USSR was left ajar. In the protocol Soviet record, it sounds like this:

"... tov. Stalin says that if Mr. Premier wants to know about our relations with Germany, then we can say that we do not have a bloc with Germany on the subject of war against England. We only have a non-aggression pact. Concerning the question of balance, comrade. Stalin says that we want to change the old balance in Europe, which acted against the USSR ... Further,

comrade. Stalin moves on to the main thing - the domination of Germany in Europe. Tov. Stalin says that he considers it still premature to talk about German domination in Europe. Defeating France does not mean dominating Europe. In order to dominate Europe, one must have dominance on the seas, and Germany does not have such dominance, and is unlikely to have it ... As for subjective data about the desires for dominance in Europe, Comrade. Stalin considers it his duty to declare that in all the meetings that he had with German representatives, he had such a desire on the part of

Germany - to dominate the whole world - did not notice ... comrade. Stalin says that he is not so naive as to believe isolated oral statements by individual leaders regarding their unwillingness to dominate Europe and the whole world. I combine these two kinds into one, because it is impossible to dominate Europe without dominating the whole world. But if, says Comrade. Stalin, I continue to believe in the unwillingness of the main leaders of Germany to dominate Europe, then I do this, because I know that they do not have the strength to dominate the whole world ...

...comrade Stalin says that he must frankly say that the USSR will supply the Germans with non-ferrous metals for the production of products destined for the USSR, and if this circumstance presents an obstacle to the conclusion of a trade agreement between the USSR and England, then, says Comrade. Stalin, I must say that the agreement will not take place ... ” (4, pp. 77-79) And this was the best thing that Cripps

managed to hear during his year of work in Moscow. Subsequently, the cooling of relations reached the point that Cripps unsuccessfully sought a meeting with the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Molotov for several months. Convinced of the futility of these attempts, Cripps (presumably on instructions from London) decided to convey his statement to Molotov in writing through a deputy. As a result, **on April 18, 1941**, the following conversation took place: “... *At the beginning of the conversation,*

Cripps stated that he wanted to visit Comrade. Molotov V. M. and for this purpose prepared a translation of an oral statement in writing for comrade. Molotov V. M., but since he did not receive a reception from Comrade. Molotov, then he has to make this statement to me. Cripps further stated that this afternoon, when he requested an appointment with Comrade. Molotov, he received an "unusual answer" from the Secretariat of comrade. Molotov: "The People's Commissar cannot accept" - without any explanation. He, Cripps, considers such an answer unusual because such an answer may mean that he is generally deprived of the opportunity to see the

people's commissar Cripps handed me a handwritten translation of the "oral statement in writing", as he called it, on 14 pages. I read the text of this statement and stated to Cripps that since this document is intended for Cde. Molotov V. M., I will pass it on

for its intended purpose and will act in accordance with the instructions that I receive from Comrade. Molotova V. M. As for me personally, the note, since it can be judged by the first reading, I do not consider serious, and that we have no suitable relations with the British government for its discussion, as I already explained to Cripps in an interview with him on March 22 on a similar occasion. Moreover, the note even contains places that are completely unacceptable to us ... On the issue of the inviolability and security of the USSR, I told Cripps that the USSR itself would take care of this, without the help of advisers ... I rejected Cripps' attempts to challenge our right to trade with Germany and with any other state, stating that this is our business and only ours ... In addition, we cannot allow any conditions to be presented to us: the Baltic (we are talking about England's refusal to recognize the fact of the annexation of the Baltic states as legal) and other issues must be resolved regardless of any conditions, the very posing of the question of which I resolutely reject ... " (6, pp. 92-93) In the very

note of Cripps, which caused such indignation of Comrade Vyshinsky, it was said: "... Since the

time that I had the pleasure of talking with Your Excellency, time has passed, fraught with events ... As for the relations between our two countries, they did not change. The British Government still sees itself compelled to regard the Soviet Union as Germany's main source of supply, both on account of the goods exported directly, and as regards the goods transported through the Soviet Union to Germany from the Far East in the amount of approximately one thousand tons per day. The Government of the United States seems to hold to some extent the same view...

... Assuming that Hitler now intends to wage a war extending over several years, he must - as he himself stated - secure a sufficient supply of food and raw materials from a source other than those now at his disposal. If he fails to achieve dominance on the seas - and this will hardly be achievable for him - he will be able to obtain these materials in an amount more or less commensurate with

his needs, only from the Soviet Union or through the Soviet Union ... In other words, Hitler could cover his needs in two ways: either through an agreement with the Soviet Union, or, if he cannot secure the conclusion and implementation of such an agreement, then by the use of force try to to seize what he needs ... Judging by the many indications that we have received from sources, usually reliable, such a seizure of supply sources in the East by force is not at all a hypothesis, but, on the contrary, forms part of the campaign plan drawn up by Germany for this spring ...

... If the Soviet Union intended to accept the first option and thus constituted a source of supply for Germany to the limit of its capabilities for the rest of the war, then the British Government would have to explicitly base its policy on this consideration. If, on the contrary. The Soviet Union intends to resist such a demand...then the British Government might, of course, wish to adopt a policy of an entirely different nature and propose to the United States that a policy be taken in the same direction as its own. I have no idea of asking Your Excellency a question about the intentions of the Soviet government, for I am fully aware of the difficulties that could be

involved in answering a question of this kind. But I have a desire to ask, in the light of the considerations outlined above, whether the Soviet Government is now interested in putting into practice an immediate improvement in its political and economic relations with the British Government, or, on the contrary, the Soviet Government will be satisfied that these relations retain their current full negative character until the end of the war. If the answer to the first part of the question is satisfactory, then, in my opinion, no time should be wasted so that such an improvement will benefit one side or the other ... ” (6, pp. 94-95)

It is worth noting that Cripps (as well as millions of his contemporaries and descendants) greatly underestimated Comrade Stalin, because he saw only two possible scenarios for the development of events: the Soviet Union agrees to supply Germany at war with England

"to the limit of its capabilities," or Germany by force takes away Soviet sources of raw materials and food. The fact that Stalin might have his own, active plan for participation in the European war, Cripps and his London leaders, it seems, did not even allow.

S. Cripps quickly received a clear answer to his request. They simply stopped talking to him in Moscow. **On June 5, 1941**, the British Ambassador had a short farewell conversation with Vyshinsky.

"... At the request of Cripps, I received him at 4 pm. 30 min. Cripps said that, at the call of his government, he was flying out of Moscow on Friday morning, June 6 this year. to Stockholm, from there to go to London to consult with his government ... Further, Cripps stated that he did not consider it possible to ask for an appointment with the people's commissar, since at one time he asked Comrade Molotov to accept him, but was refused, and now he does not I would like to ask for another

refusal... ...Leaving, Cripps had in mind that, perhaps, this was his last visit to the NKID, and thanked me for my attentive attitude towards him during the entire "barren" year of his stay in Moscow. I wished Cripps a safe journey..." (6, p. 315)

This, however, was not the "end of the chapter" yet. The famous TASS Statement of **June 13, 1941**, for some reason, began with direct accusations

against Cripps: *"...Even before the arrival of the British ambassador to the USSR, Mr. rumors are being circulated about "the proximity of a war between the USSR and Germany" ... These rumors are clumsily concocted propaganda of forces hostile to the USSR and Germany, interested in further expanding and unleashing a war ... "Whatever the goals of this strange Declaration were in reality, there was absolutely*

no need in referring to the British ambassador in direct connection with "propaganda for forces interested in further expansion and initiation of war." One could refer to any newspaper in the preamble of the Statement, since in mid-June 1941 the entire world press was hotly discussing the imminent start of the Soviet-German war. According to all written and unwritten laws of diplomacy, the ambassador represents the state that sent him. Accordingly, offensive

statements addressed to the British ambassador were a clear demonstration of Moscow's desire to further worsen Soviet-British relations. And for no reasonable reason. So to speak, "kick out of habit." As you know, "it's better for a boxer to be rude on

the phone." England at that moment was not in a position where she could adequately respond to insults against her ambassador. Churchill writes in his memoirs: "... *The climax came on May 1, when the raids on Liverpool and Mersey began, lasting*

seven nights in a row, 76 thousand people lost their homes, and 3 thousand were killed and wounded. Of the 144 berths, 69 were disabled, and the ships temporarily in the ports were destroyed by three-quarters ... On May 10, the enemy again dropped incendiary bombs on London. More than two thousand fires broke out in the city, and we could not extinguish them, since about 150 water mains were destroyed by the bombing ... 5 docks and more than 70 critical facilities were damaged, half of which were factories. All the major railway stations, with the exception of one, were put out of action for several weeks, and through tracks were fully opened to traffic only in early June. Over 3,000 people were killed and wounded. This raid was also historical in another respect: the result was the destruction of the House of Commons. One bomb caused destruction that could not be repaired for

several years..."

For this or some other reason, but on **June 16, 1941**, Chargé d'Affaires, secretary of the British Embassy, Mr. Baggaley, at a meeting with Vyshinsky behaved almost ingratiatingly:

"... At the request of Baggaley, I received him at 17:00. 10 minutes. Baggaley said that he came to me as a deputy people's commissar on his first visit. Baggaley immediately added that he read with great pleasure the TASS report published in Soviet newspapers on June 14 of this year, refuting the rumors circulated in the foreign press about the imminence of a war between the USSR and Germany. He, Baggaley, however, does not quite understand and is somewhat surprised by this. that the TASS report mentions the name of Cripps ... Why is the message

TASS Are these rumors and their spread associated with the arrival of Cripps in London?

I replied to Bagdalei that the TASS report states the facts as they are. The facts are that after the arrival of Cripps in London, the English press especially began to exaggerate rumors about the upcoming German attack on the USSR ...

Bagdalei further stated that, as he imagined, the TASS report contained two main provisions: firstly, the report indicated that there were no negotiations between the USSR and Germany and, secondly, that there were no grounds for expressing concern in connection with the movement of German troops. When I asked who Bagdalei had in mind when speaking about expressing concern, Bagdalei answered - the USSR. To this I

replied to Bagdalei that, as can be seen from the TASS report, there was no reason for the USSR to show any concern. Others may be worried..." (6, p. 376) Comrade

Vyshinsky's next meeting with Bagdalei took place
June 22 at about 11:30 am.

"... Bagdalei said that he had not yet received instructions from his government, but given the changed situation, he said, it would be possible to establish cooperation, to a certain extent, before receiving instructions from his government ... The British Air Force could help the USSR by bombing German armed forces in the Middle East. The British government could provide assistance in supplying the USSR through Vladivostok or the Persian Gulf, and also send English officers to the USSR with experience in fighting against German tanks to assist the Soviet command ... "On June 22, 1941, Vyshinsky also did not receive new instructions from his government . At 11

o'clock in the morning, he did not yet know that it was time to throw out the "old record" and launch a new one: blame and demand, blame and demand, demand and scold for the fact that the new Anglo-American allies did not help the Soviet Union. Vyshinsky did not yet know all this, so he continued talking to the British attorneys in the same tone to which he had become accustomed in the previous months.

"... I told Baggaley that I would convey his message to my government and if I received the appropriate instructions, I would inform Baggaley.

Baggaley declared that under present conditions he would consider it necessary to get acquainted and establish contact with Comrade Molotov. I promised (this is already a new word) Baggaley to bring his request to the attention of Comrade Molotov.

During a conversation with Baggaley, Comrade Molotov began to speak on the radio, Baggaley asked permission to listen to Comrade Molotov's speech. In my office, Baggaley listened to Comrade Molotov's speech; his translator translated the main provisions of Comrade Molotov's speech. Baggaley asked if I could give him the full text of Comrade Molotov's speech. I answered

Baggaley that I did not have the full text of Comrade Molotov's speech at the moment, but that Comrade Molotov's speech would still be broadcast on the radio and that it would be printed..." (6,

p. 439) This is how they talked that morning with the plenipotentiary their future allies: "Buy a newspaper at the newsstand and read..." If the situation

*in which England found itself in the spring of 1941 can be called tragic, then Soviet-American diplomatic contacts at that moment acquired an openly farcical character. It all started with 200 cases of the American ambassador to Poland, Mr. Biddle, or, to be more precise, his wife, a lady from a very wealthy family. During the "liberation campaign" in September 1939, a huge collection of antiques belonging to Biddle's wife "disappeared" in the building of the American consulate in Lvov. For almost two years, the Americans pestered the Soviet Foreign Ministry with a request to look into this issue. They were very surprised how, in a country where not only private collections of works of art, but also a bicycle with a gramophone aroused the wary glances of neighbors, 200 boxes with paintings, furs, carpets, silverware, etc. could disappear without a trace. In the end, patience Soviet diplomats burst, and on **June 5, 1941** (in the very laziness when Cripps, slurping unsaltedly, left Moscow), Comrade Lozovsky, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, told US Ambassador Steingardt the following verbatim:*

"... Mr. Ambassador in vain attaches such great importance to the question of the belongings of the former American ambassador to Poland, Mr. Biddle. A revolution was taking place in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus at that time (an interesting formulation that relieves the Kremlin rulers of any responsibility for the life and property of the population of Poland, which the Soviet Union occupied by force of arms). Mr. Ambassador obviously thinks that when people make a revolution, they only think about how to save someone's property.

Mr. Biddle himself is to blame for the fact that his property was not preserved, since he did not transfer this property to any of the representatives of the Soviet government. The Soviet government is not the guardian of Mr. Biddle's property and cannot be held responsible for his loss ... "

Of course, the diplomats' conversation was not limited to "explanations" about the Biddle boxes. Comrade Lozovsky "reprimanded" (this is the term he uses in his report) the American ambassador in full. *"... The US government*

confiscated gold belonging to the State Bank of the USSR (this term was used by Comrade Lozovsky to designate the gold and foreign exchange reserves of the Baltic states that were stored in American banks), seized the ships of the Baltic republics, and not only did not liquidate the missions and consulates of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, but recognizes these puppet envoys and consuls as representatives of non-existent governments. With such an attitude of the Government of the United States towards the rights and interests of the Soviet Union, it is natural that the Soviet Government cannot even begin to consider the property claims set forth in the numerous notes of the US Embassy in Moscow ... Mr. Ambassador said that some deputies want to speak in Congress against THE USSR. We are little moved by such performances. If there are deputies who want to make a fuss and scandal in the Congress, then let them make a fuss, that's their business... this partly explains

the situation that had arisen. He never spoke with Comrade. Stalin, and spoke with Comrade Molotov two or three times and only on minor issues ... While Soviet engineers are visiting American factories, he, Steingardt, has not yet been allowed to visit any large Soviet factory ... According to Steingardt, in the next 12 months, and some believe in the next 2-3 weeks, the Soviet Union will experience the greatest crisis. He is surprised that in such a difficult time the Soviet Union does not want to strengthen its relations with the United States ...

Further, Steingardt turned to the issue of the accumulation of German troops on the western border of the USSR. He is sure that the Germans are ready to attack the Soviet Union... The Germans are becoming more impudent, and it is becoming more and more difficult to negotiate with them. They will demand more and more. This year there is a very serious situation with the harvest, and this may push the Germans to oppose the USSR. To this I replied that the Soviet Union was very calm about all sorts of rumors about an attack on its borders. The

Soviet Union will meet fully armed anyone who tries to violate its borders. If there were such people who would try to do this, then the day of the attack on the Soviet Union would be the most unfortunate in the history of the country that attacked the USSR ... ”(6, pp. 316–322)
Comrade Lozovsky was not mistaken in this. Day 22 June 1941

became the most unfortunate in history ...

Chapter 10

COVER PLAN

The large-scale regrouping of Soviet troops that began in May 1941 inevitably created a difficult and dangerous situation. As a matter of fact, the process of strategic deployment, both in form and content, is similar to what is probably known to every move from one apartment to another. In a couple of weeks after the move, life will return to normal and, as everyone hopes, will be better than it was in the same place. But it will be later. In the very short moment of moving, even such a simple matter as finding a thread, a needle and a button of the right size turns into an insoluble problem. The same situation is created during the redeployment of troops. A tank division (370 tanks, 11,000 personnel), deployed in battle formation, is a formidable force. The same division, loaded into wagons stuffed with plywood for camouflage, becomes helpless, like a baby. Worse, it turns into a convenient target for the enemy. Any intruder can stop it by unscrewing the necessary nut on the railway arrow, a squadron of enemy bombers can turn a military train into a pile of burning debris. Accordingly, in order for the short period of gathering reservists, moving and operational deployment of troops not to become their last, it is necessary to carry out a whole range of special events, which in military language is called "Mobilization and Deployment Cover". Or just a cover. Sometimes (this happens, unfortunately, both in documents and in special military literature) the exact expression "covering the mobilization,

concentration and deployment" is replaced by the outwardly similar "covering the border." This seemingly slight slovenliness in terminology has been and remains the cornerstone on which the big lie about the outbreak of war is built. The border, like the door in your apartment, is not "covered", but closed tightly. The armed forces of any state are created so that its borders are reliably protected. Forever. A cover is limited in time and by the nature of the tasks to be solved.

short term operation. The time of the cover operation is obviously determined by the timing of mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops. This is a few days or, in the worst case, a few weeks. The object of cover is not the border line (although holding this line is desirable), but the process of mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops. This means that ensuring the uninterrupted operation of a railway station located 100 km from the border is incomparably more important than holding each border post. In extreme cases, at the stage of covering from the pillar, you can retreat. This is not the main thing. The army, mobilized and deployed in battle formations, will return all the pillars to their place. From

these simple considerations, at least two simple and very important conclusions follow. First, an operation covering the mobilization and deployment of troops is always essentially a defensive operation. But **it does not in the least follow** from this that the purpose of the mobilization and strategic deployment itself (to cover which the defensive cover operation is carried out) is always the defense of the border line and pillars. Nothing like this. Any aggressor (Hitler and Stalin, in particular) needed to cover the mobilization and concentration of their troops before each next act of international robbery. The second conclusion is that the cover of the mobilization, concentration and deployment of

troops, by definition, cannot be carried out by all the troops available to the command, and even fully mobilized troops. **Cover is always carried out by part of the forces.** It cannot be otherwise. In not a single military garrison does the entire personnel take up night duty. Guard duty (an analogue of which at the strategic level is the cover of mobilization and deployment) is always carried out by a small part of the military personnel. Alas, this simple logic is not always clear to the general public, on which professional liars from military history have speculated and are speculating. An example of such demagoguery that has already become infamous is a series of publications in the Military Historical Journal (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

for 1996) under the noisy title "The End of Global Lies." By publishing (55 years after they were written) the cover plans

Western military districts, worthy successors of the traditions of Glavpur, tried to misinform readers with a deliberately false assertion that only these — defensive by definition — cover plans exhausted **the entire operational plan of the Red Army** in 1941. The obvious question is why, then, starting from May 1941, the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union was carried out? Is it just to create unnecessary problems with his cover? — stayed behind the scenes. Such decisive shamelessness, which the authors of the “global lie” showed, is

already quite rare. But bitter lamentations about the fact that “the troops of the western districts, who were not mobilized and did not have time to reach the border, could not, and could not, repel a sudden attack by a numerically superior enemy”, are present, unfortunately, in almost every publication devoted to the events summer of 41. But in this phrase, so familiar to the ear of a Soviet person, every word is an inaccuracy, a mistake or a deliberate deception.

The rifle divisions of the border districts were almost completely (85-90%) manned and equipped with the main types of weapons (this was discussed in detail in the previous chapter). The absence of a regular (i.e., huge) number of vehicles and tractors (a favorite topic of adherents of the “global lie”) did not have a decisive significance in the framework of a cover operation that was very limited in terms of time and tasks. Its duration was determined mainly by the timing of the mobilization of the main forces of the Red Army deployed in the West. These terms in June of the 41st were no longer measured in weeks, but in days (*“out of 303 divisions that were supposed to be mobilized according to the MP-41 plan, 172 divisions had terms of full readiness on the 2nd - 4th day of mobilization, 60 divisions - on 4 - 5th day ... ”*). The most important thing is that the cover for the mobilization and deployment of troops has nothing to do with the slogans “Not a step back” and “Stand to the death.” In the specific conditions of the last week of June 1941, rifle divisions solving the task of covering were required to: **hold back the enemy offensive for several days, reduce the pace of this offensive, and prevent the breakthrough of large**

enemy units into the operational depth of the defense of the district troops. That's all. No less, but no

more. Mobile defense is a completely "legitimate" type of combat, directly provided for by the Field Manual

PU-39. *"Mobile defense pursues the goal - by losing space, to win the time necessary to organize defense on a new line, to ensure the concentration of troops in this direction ... The troops defending an intermediate line must inflict losses on the advancing enemy, force him to turn around, lose time on organizing an offensive and, without engaging in a stubborn battle with him, slip away from the blow.* Even a planned, organized and controlled retreat (not to be confused with "mobile defense, and even more so with a disorderly stampede) 30-40-50 km from the line of border posts during the first week of hostilities did not create any problems for mobilization in Minsk or for unloading troops of the 20th Army near Smolensk. Strictly speaking, a withdrawal of 40–50 km did not greatly hinder even the progress of mobilization in Bialystok (75–90 km from the border). Such was our geography, which had nothing to do with the geography of the Czech Republic, Belgium or Denmark, captured by the Wehrmacht in a few days.

Did the troops of the western districts have the opportunity to solve the task of covering? This is a completely wrong question, and there is no point in answering it. The possibility of resistance is not a certain constant, independent of the will and actions of people. Theoretically, the Finnish army in December 1939 had no way to stop the steel avalanche of the Red Army. Practically stopped. Moreover, having advanced 150 km to Vyborg for three months and 12 days (the average rate of advance is 1.5 km per day), the Red Army lost 365,000 servicemen, including 127,000 irretrievably. (2, pp. 99, 123) If the troops of the western border districts of the Soviet Union, the number of which (149 divisions) was ten times greater than the maximum strength of the Finnish army, inflicted such losses on the Wehrmacht in June 1941 and reduced the rate of its offensive to 1.5 km per day, the cover operation could be considered brilliantly executed. Another question deserves discussion: what cover plans, what forces and

did the troops of the western districts have the means to carry out these plans in

June 1941? The first and most effective way to cover the mobilization and operational deployment of troops is to choose an enemy so weak that he simply will not risk firing the first shot and thereby disrupting the planned course of the deployment of our troops. It's possible. This is exactly what happened with the wars waged by the USSR in 1939-1940s. Neither Poland, whose troops in September 1939 were connected with the fight against the Wehrmacht, nor Finland with its small and poorly armed army, did not even try to disrupt the deployment of the Red Army troops on their borders by active hostilities. As a kind of "cover" for the operational deployment of the Red Army before the invasion of Finland, political negotiations with the Finnish delegation were used (according to the deeply correct remark of Professor Kilin), which took place in Moscow in October-November 1939 with the participation of Stalin and Molotov. (51) Unbelievable - but true. Approximately

according to the same scenario, the Kremlin rulers were going to start a war against Germany. The development of separate and specific plans for the operation to cover the mobilization and deployment did not begin in September of the 39th year - after the emergence of a common line of contact between German and Soviet troops, not in the late autumn of the 40th year, when work was already in full swing to develop plans for an attack on Krakow - Katowice and beyond everywhere, but only in May 1941! Surprisingly, the Soviet "historians" emphasized this circumstance with particular zeal, apparently not realizing that the absence of plans to cover mobilization and deployment (in the presence of plans for an invasion of Europe with an offensive depth of 300 km at the stage of solving the "first task") demonstrates by no **means special peacefulness, but the transcendent arrogance** of the country's top military-political leadership. So, according to the December (1940) plan of the headquarters of the South-Western Front, the ground forces were planned to go on the offensive only *"from the morning of the 30th day of mobilization."* (4, pp. 493-495) And what will the enemy do during these 30 days? Hitler, as you know, was paranoid, but still not a masochist, and he would hardly have patiently waited for *"the morning of the 30th day of mobilization."* It can

the December plan of the headquarters of the South-West. Among the 5,500 words that set forth this detailed offensive plan in southern Poland, there is the following phrase: "*Do not allow the enemy to invade Soviet territory, but destroy the intruder and ensure the concentration and deployment of the armies of the front for the offensive. The defense directly on the fortified line is carried out by troops intended to cover the deployment, according to the plan set out on the map.*" And this is absolutely everything that is said about the cover operation. Neither the composition of the cover forces, nor their deployment, nor the lines of defense and possible withdrawal, nor the material support of the cover operation are indicated in any way in the plan. If there was at least some sense in such planning, then it most likely consisted in the hope that the war against Germany could be started according to the most "lightweight option", namely: the main forces of the Wehrmacht left either for the Middle East, or (which would be even

more reliable and better) landed in the British Isles. In such a scenario of events, the 20-30 third-rate German infantry divisions left in the East will either not risk interfering with the strategic deployment of the Red Army at all, or will be easily "destroyed when trying to invade Soviet territory." Other, much more disturbing expectations appear **only in the spring of 1941**. So, already in the April (1941) Directive for the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the armies of the Western OVO, the phrase about "*the possibility of the enemy going on the offensive before the end of our concentration*" appears. The fact that the development of full-fledged cover plans began precisely in May (the relevant directives of the People's Commissar of Defense were sent to the districts on May 5-14, 1941). that is, simultaneously with the postponement of the start of the implementation of the war plan from 1942 to the end of the summer of 1941, is hardly a coincidence. It was probably in May 1941 that the final understanding came to Stalin that Hitler's invasion of the British Isles was being postponed to an indefinite future, and the Red Army would have to meet with the main and most combat-ready units of the Wehrmacht and the Luftwaffe. Accordingly, the attitude towards complexity and significance has also changed.

cover operations.

Plans for covering the mobilization, concentration and operational deployment of troops were developed at the headquarters of the western border districts and submitted for approval to the General Staff of the Red Army from June 6 to 19. Since the cover plans were developed in the districts on the basis of the same instructions from the high command, the tasks in all these plans were literally formulated in the same words: "To prevent the intrusion of both

ground and air forces of the enemy into the territory of the district .
By stubborn defense along the state border line and the line of the fortified regions being created, repel the enemy offensive and ensure the mobilization, concentration and deployment of the district troops. Air defense and aviation operations to ensure the uninterrupted operation of railways, the concentration of district troops and the operation of warehouses. By all types of reconnaissance in a timely manner to determine the nature of the concentration and grouping of enemy troops.

Tasks that are understandable and fully consistent with the meaning of the cover operation. However, only these defensive actions on their own territory in the Red Army of the model of May 1941 were not exhausted even by cover plans! The cover plans for all districts contained instructions on active, offensive, aviation operations not limited by state borders: *"To gain air supremacy and troops, to disrupt delay the concentration and deployment of enemy troops and with powerful strikes against the main groupings of railway junctions, bridges and spans."* The last words deserve special attention. "To disrupt and delay the concentration and deployment of enemy troops" is possible if and only if the cover plan is put into action BEFORE the enemy fires the first shot; moreover, even BEFORE the enemy began to prepare for this "first shot" (that is, he began to deploy a strike group of his troops near our border). This once again confirms the indisputable fact that the cover plan (in the form in which it was developed in May 1941) **was** in no way a "plan to repel aggression" - it was a plan to cover (ensure) the preparation of the Red Army for inflicting **a crushing preemptive strike on German troops.**

It is also worth noting that in all district cover plans there is such a (or similar in meaning) phrase: *"Destroy enemy aircraft by successive strikes of military aviation on established bases and combat operations in the air ..."* In the first hours and days of the war, strike at "established bases" (it is clear from the context that we are talking about base airfields) of enemy aircraft is possible only if the locations of these airfields, the routes of approach to them were reconnoitered in advance. And such painstaking preparatory work was carried out in reality. For example, in the appendices to the cover plan for the Western OVO, *"bomber crew of an aircraft squad to strike enemy airfields"* occupied three sheets of text. In the very text of the cover plan, the tasks of the Air Force of the Western Front were said, in particular, as follows:

"... a) inflict a simultaneous strike on the established enemy airfields and bases located in the first zone, to the line of Insterburg (Chernyakhovsk), Allenstein (Olshtyn), Mława, Warsaw, Demblin (100-130 km from the border. - M.S.) , covering the actions of bomber aircraft with fighter aircraft. To accomplish this task, 138 links will be required, we have 142 links, i.e., using all available bomber aircraft, we can solve this problem at the same time;

b) with a second sortie of bomber aircraft, strike at enemy airfields and bases located in the second zone up to the Königsberg, Marienburg (Malbork), Torun, Lodz line (200-250 km from the border. - M.S.). For this purpose, aircraft such as SB, PE-2, AR-2, of which we have 122 links, can be used, 132 links are required to solve this problem, 10 links are missing

c) ... only aircraft of the PE-2 and AR-2 types, which can carry out dive bombing, can be used to strike railway / road bridges ... Due to the fact that we have few dive bombers, it is necessary to take only the main bridges for destruction (through Vistula - M.S.), something like: in Torun. Warsaw and Deblin..."

Once again, these are not plans to defeat Germany and win the world war. These are just private operations carried out on

preparatory, in fact, the stage of covering the mobilization and deployment of the main

forces ... As expected, in terms of covering the Odessa district, already at the stage of mobilization and deployment, the district Air Force was tasked with "systematically destroying oil depots and oil refineries" on Romanian territory. It is noteworthy that in the OdVO cover plan, a phrase (and a corresponding table) about the end of August appears (*"by the end of August 1941, the combat effectiveness of the district air force should significantly improve quantitatively and qualitatively ..."*). And in terms of covering the Kiev OVO, a phrase of this type is repeated many times: *"In July and August of this year. it is planned to concentrate an additional 50 thousand units. anti-personnel mines ... 200 t count.*

wire ... " Plans to cover the two districts (Kiev and Leningrad) assumed active offensive operations **not only by the Air Force, but also by ground forces:** *" Under favorable conditions, all defending troops and reserves of the armies and the district should be ready, at the direction of the High Command, to deliver swift strikes to defeat the groupings the enemy, transferring hostilities to his territory and capturing advantageous lines.* Thus, in the zone of the upcoming main attack of the Red Army (Western Ukraine), the line between covering the deployment and the start of the main offensive operation was largely erased. Active tasks were set for the Leningrad District, probably based on the alleged weakness of the enemy (the Finnish army). All of the above about the active (if not even offensive)

orientation of the plans to cover the border districts does not mean at all that the main task - the defense of the territory of the district - was not given due attention in them. The defensive operations of the armies and the district (front) as a whole were worked out in great detail and without any "captive" attitude. Contrary to the completely absurd, but at the same time deeply rooted myths that "Stalin forbade retreating and that's why ...", the plans for covering all districts provided for a situation of forced withdrawal (and not for 30-40 km), and the possibility of a breakthrough of mechanized enemy units in operational depth.

The cover plan for the Odessa District allowed for the possibility of withdrawal from the boundary of the Prut River to the boundary of the eastern bank of the Dniester (more than 100 km). The plan for covering the Baltic OVO demanded *"to prepare for a stubborn defense a bridgehead on the left bank of the Neman River along the line ... (50-100 km east of the border). To do this, immediately begin to build long-term powerful structures ... In the area of \u200b\u200bthis bridgehead, west. and east. Kaunas to prepare crossings over the river. Neman ... have pontoon bridges across the Neman in the area of \u200b\u200bVilki, Rumshiskes (50-60 km from the border) and have at least three crossings for tanks across the river. Viliya in the Skorey section, Jonava (100-120 km). The plan for covering the Western OVO specifically indicated the options for the actions of the troops of the district (front) in the event of a breakthrough of "large enemy motorized mechanized forces" in five possible operational directions, including up to the Voronovo-Lida line (more than 100 km east of the border). Even in terms of covering the Kiev OVO, despite the huge concentration of the Red Army forces on this theater of operations, it was planned to create numerous rear defensive lines, "with their full development during the period of concentration."* For example, for the construction of fortifications along the Styr River at the front of Lutsk, Stanislavchik, Toporov (the northern base of the "Lviv ledge", 70-90 km from the state border), it was planned to *"attract from the troops and the local population daily up to 30 thousand people. at 1 500 supplies. Taking into account the presence of a water line, the norm of workers has been reduced by half. Readiness of the defensive zone: M-10 - 50 percent, M-15 - 100 percent.* It was planned in the Kiev OVO and large-scale destruction of roads and bridges in the event of an enemy breakthrough: *"With the outbreak of hostilities, all railway sections adjacent directly to the state border at a depth of 5 to 15 kilometers are destroyed by undermining or a track destroyer, railway sections located further from the front line 5 - 15 km are being prepared for destruction ... Medium bridges more than 15 meters high, large*

bridges and tunnels are mined, but destroyed by special order of the army commander ... "Special attention in all cover plans was paid to anti-tank defense. This, however, does not mean that the Red Army soldiers were ordered to throw bottles under the tanks. It was planned to build anti-

grounds, on the basis of the enormous technical and organizational resources of the Red Army. *"In the event of a breakthrough of the defense front by large enemy motorized mechanized units, the fight against them and their destruction will be carried out directly by the command of the district ... The task of the covering armies (i.e., rifle divisions and corps. - M.S.) in this case will be to close the breakthrough at the front and to prevent enemy motorized infantry and field troops from entering it. The task of anti-tank artillery brigades will be reduced to meeting enemy tanks with powerful artillery fire on prepared lines and, together with aviation, to delay their advance until our motorized mechanized corps approach and counterattack ..."* This is a general scheme of actions. And here is one of the specific solutions included in the plan to cover the Western OVO:

"...4. In the event of a breakthrough of large enemy motorized units from the Sokoluv, Sedlec front in the direction of Belsk, Volkovysk, the 100th Infantry Division, together with the 7th PTABR, the 43rd SAD (mixed air division) and the 12th BAD (bomber air division), firmly occupying the rear line on the front Grulek, Hainuvka (60 km from the border, in the area of the famous Belovezhskaya Pushcha), destroys advancing enemy tanks and motorized infantry, preventing them from spreading east of this line. The 6th mechanized corps from the Bialystok region strikes in a general correction on Bratsk, Tsekhanovets and, in cooperation with the 9th MAD and the 12th BAD, destroys the enemy. The 13th mechanized corps, under the cover of anti-tank weapons, the 100th rifle division from the area of Hajnówka, Cheremkha, Kalenkoviche, in cooperation with the 43rd SAD, strikes in the general direction at Dzyadkowice, Tsekhanovets, destroying the enemy and cutting off his escape route. The remnants of the enemy are thrown under the blow of the 6th mechanized corps and the 100th rifle division ..."

All SADs, dietary supplements, PTABRs listed in this fragment, and not only they actually existed.

The troops of the Western OVO included four mechanized corps (11th MK, 6th MK, 13th MK, 14th MK), three anti-tank brigades (6th, 7th and 8th). The emerging 17th MK and 20th MK could and should have been used as a mobile anti-tank formation (*"before being equipped with tanks, they are armed with artillery materiel, which remained free after the formation of artillery brigades and are used for defense as anti-tank units"*). This

the decision of the commander of the troops of the Western OVO D. G. Pavlov was not the fruit of a "local initiative". As early as May 14, 1941, at the direction of the head of the Main Armored Directorate of the Red Army, Ya. N. Fedorenko, it was decided to arm the tank regiments of tank and motorized mechanized divisions with anti-tank artillery and use them as a mobile reserve for anti-tank weapons of the army or front. The directive sent on May 16, 1941 to the districts emphasized that the method of direct fire from tank and anti-tank guns is the same and does not create additional difficulties for the training of personnel. For arming such "anti-tank tank regiments", 1,200 76.2 mm guns and 1,000 45-mm guns were allocated, 42 guns (24x76 + 18x45) per regiment (i.e., more than 200 additional anti-tank guns per mechanized corps). 1,200 SIS-5/6 vehicles and 1,500 GAZ vehicles were transferred to provide guns with mechanical traction equipment. The deadline for the implementation of this directive is **July 1, 1941** (1, p. 348). one strategic direction, up to 10 thousand tanks on the entire Soviet-German front), there was no trace. In

the first two or three days of the war, only two tank corps (47th and 24th) of the 2nd tank group of Guderian operated throughout the territory of Belarus (in the direction of Brest - Slonim), armed with about 800 tanks in total. The divisions of the 3rd Panzer Group, as you know, were advancing from the "Suwalk ledge" not to the southeast, to Grodno, but to the northeast. They entered the Minsk highway, describing a huge arc of Alytus - Vilnius - Molodechno with a length of more than 250 km, only on June 25, 1941. The most important component of the defensive potential of the Red Army was a strip of fortified areas along the entire western border. It was **the system of fortified areas that to a decisive extent ensured the solution of the main task** of the cover operation: to contain part of the forces of the enemy offensive for the time

necessary for the concentration and deployment of the main forces of the Red Army. Turning to the geographical map of the western regions of the Soviet Union, we will see that the terrain itself was there to a large extent "anti-tank". This is all the more true and significant

of the German Wehrmacht of the 1941 model, in which motorized rifle units did not move on tracked armored personnel carriers (as in the old Soviet cinema), but on ordinary, "civilian" trucks and captured buses, and German tanks on their narrow tracks got stuck after the first strong rain on the terrain, which in Russia was called "road".

Army Group "North" immediately after crossing the border "stumbled" into the full-flowing Neman River, moreover, in its lower (i.e., the widest) course. Further, having crossed many small rivers and streams, the German divisions, about 250 km from the border, came to the banks of the wide navigable river Western Dvina (Daugava), and again in its lower reaches. And this is the best route provided by nature. The troops of the Army Group "Center" were waiting for much more serious obstacles. The terrain in the offensive zone of the 3rd and 2nd tank groups (southern Lithuania and Western Belarus) is completely "anti-tank". From the north, the "Bialystok ledge" is covered by a strip of impassable swamps in the floodplain of the forest river Biebrzha, in the south, the border was drawn along the banks of the navigable river Western Bug (again, in its lower reaches). After forcing the Bug, the Germans were waiting for the swampy banks of the Narev River and a continuous series of forest rivers, tributaries of the Pripyat and Neman (Svisloch, Yaselda, Zelvyanka, Shara). The few roads among the dense forests and swamps of Western Belarus to this day represent a kind of mountain gorges: the stuck (or padded) head car of the column cannot be bypassed or bypassed. The 1st Panzer Group (Army Group South) could launch an invasion practically only through a narrow (100–120 km) "corridor" between the cities of Kovel and Brody. From the north, this corridor is limited by an absolutely impassable strip of swamps of Polesie, from the south - by the Carpathian Mountains. On this path, the tank divisions had to cross the Western Bug, and then the southern tributaries of the Pripyat (Turya, Stokhod, Styr, Goryn, Sluch) following one after another at almost equal intervals of 50–60 km. South of the Carpathians, in Moldavia and in the steppes of southern Ukraine, the terrain, it would seem, is much more favorable for the advancing troops - there are neither forests nor swamps. But there are three full-flowing rivers - the Prut, the Dniester, the Southern Bug - in their lower reaches. In fact, only to the east of the Dnieper and the Western Dvina (Daugava) did Germa

terrain that allows for a wide and fast operational maneuver. But from the border to the Dnieper, more than 450 km had to be covered. This roughly corresponds to the size of the whole of Germany from its western to eastern border.

The obstacles created by nature itself were supplemented and repeatedly strengthened by man-made obstacles.

A continuous strip of fortified areas of the Molotov Line stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea: Telshiai, Shauliai, Kaunas, Alytus, Grodno, Osovets. Zambrovsky, Brest, Kovelsky, Vladimir-Volynsky, Rava-Russian, Strumilovsky, Peremyshl, Upper Prut and Lower Prut. The very fact of the existence of a powerful defensive zone did not fit into the highest approved concept of "unpreparedness for war and "natural defeat" so much that Soviet "historians" declared this fact a long-term war of extermination. Multi-meter reinforced concrete walls collapsed under the pressure of a thousand-fold repetition of the "mantra" about how the naive and gullible Stalin broke all the pillboxes on the old (1939) state border, but did not build anything worthwhile on the new one. Everyone knows this. This is stated in any book about the war. This is taught in school. But the awl bursts uncontrollably out of the bag

In issue 4 for 1989, the Military Historical Journal, the press organ of the USSR Ministry of Defense, published a table with numbers reflecting the state of the fortified areas and the new border. (56) The editors have generously allocated 5.5 x 2.5 cm of magazine space for this table. Information was typed in microscopic letters that only in one Western OVO by June 1, 1941, 332 DOS (long-term firing structure) were built, and another 2,130 (two thousand one hundred and thirty) DOS were under construction. The tiny area of the tablet did not allow readers to be informed that the deadline for completion of construction was again set on **July 1, 1941**, and work was in full swing from dawn to dusk. As Sandalov writes (at that time he was the chief of staff of the 4th Army of the Western OVO), *"all engineer units of the 4th army and the 33rd engineer regiment of the district were involved in the construction of the Brest fortified area ... In March - April 1941, there were additionally attracted 10 thousand people of the local population with 4 thousand supplies ... with*

June, by order of the district, two battalions from each rifle regiment of the division were involved in defensive work ... " (26) Two battalions from the regiment - this is 2 out of 3. Almost the entire army turned into a huge "construction battalion". On June 16, 1941, the construction rush was once again spurred on by the Decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR "On accelerating the putting of fortified areas on alert." To equip new missile defenses, it was allowed to take 7,700 machine guns from NZ and mobilization stocks, factories were instructed to manufacture 5,500 casemate sights, 1,340 periscopes - and this was only in June and July...

By the way, no one blew up the fortified areas on the "old" border before the war and did not fill it with earth. Against. On May 25, 1941, another government decree was issued on measures to reconstruct the URs of the "Stalin Line". Some DOS "Stalin's line" are intact to this day. No one planned to transport weapons from them to the "Molotov Line", and it would have been impossible in principle: DOSs on the "old" border were 9/10 machine guns, while on the new border half of the DOSs had to be armed with new artillery pieces, with the latest optics, automatic loading, new ball mounts that protect the garrison from flamethrowers, etc. Probably, we will not be much mistaken if we assume that by June 22 - a week before the scheduled completion date for construction - a significant part of the unfinished DOS was ready or almost ready. Nobody knows the

exact numbers. So, summing up the table to the above article in VIZh gives the number 332, on the next page, in the text of the article, it is said that *"by June 1941, 505 DOSs were built."* The commander of the district, D. G. Pavlov, called the number 600 at the trial. (25) G. K. Zhukov in his memoirs names even larger numbers: *"By the beginning of the war, about 2,500 reinforced concrete structures were built, of which 1,000 were armed with Urov artillery, and the remaining 1500 - only machine guns."* (15, p. 233) Be that as it may, but on average, on each kilometer of the western border, there were 2-3 reinforced concrete pillboxes in varying degrees of readiness, ranging from actually finished, but not yet accepted by the commission, to barely rising above the concrete foundation. And that's all on average. In fact, among the age-old forests and marshy swamps of the Western

There was no need for Belarus or Ukrainian Polissya to build DOS in a continuous even chain. Defense nodes were concentrated on a few road directions and tank-accessible areas of the terrain, which concentration led to an even greater concentration of defensive structures. Even the simple placement in these unfinished concrete "sheds" (the walls of which withstood a direct hit by a heavy field howitzer projectile) of ordinary machine-gun platoons of rifle divisions armed with standard "tar" and "maxims" made it possible to create a continuous zone of fire damage. What does all this mean tactically? Let us turn again to the fundamental

document—the Field Manual. Chapter Five, "Fundamentals of Battle Orders," Art. 98: *"When attacking heavily fortified zones and SD, the width of the front of the offensive **of the division** can be reduced to 2 km";* Art. 105: *"When defending the UR, the fronts can be wider, reaching up to 3-5 km per **battalion**."* In order to knock out a battalion defending in a fortified area, a division is needed. A division is nine infantry battalions and two artillery regiments. Of course, all these regulations apply to the defense of a fully equipped and armed SD. Of course, on June 22, 1941, it was still far from the state of "fully equipped". But, on the other hand, where, along the entire length of the front from the Baltic to the Carpathians, was the ratio of forces 9 to 1 in favor of the Wehrmacht? The most unfavorable balance of forces for us has developed precisely in the zone of the Western Front. The most powerful enemy grouping (Army Group Center) was advancing there, and not the most numerous troops of the Western OVO were defending. The most unfavorable balance of forces was as follows: 48 German divisions (31 infantry, 1 cavalry, 9 tank, 5 motorized and 2 motorized divisions of the SS troops) against 44 divisions of the Red Army (24 rifle, 2 cavalry, 12 tank and 6 motorized). But again, this is an average for the period of operations (alas, this operation ended in the first days of July with the encirclement and defeat of the main forces of the Western Front). In fact (not according to the cover plan, but precisely taking into account its untimely implementation), on the very first day of the war, the first echelon of the Wehrmacht (24 infantry, 1 cavalry, 4 tank divisions) collided with the first echelon of the troops of the Western OVO (12 rifle, 2 cavalry, 4

armored and 2 motorized divisions). The numerical superiority of the enemy is obvious, but it is by no means expressed in the proportions of "division against battalion".

Doesn't it contradict what was said above about the possibilities and advantages of long-term fortification by the fact that the much more advanced "Maginot Line", "Atlantic Wall", "Western Wall" did not justify the hopes placed on them? No, it doesn't contradict. Why? Hopes were different. The French military-political leadership hoped to solve **the strategic task of defending the country** through the costly construction of the "Chinese wall of the 20th century." The idea turned out to be dead. In the late 1930s, medium-sized twin-engine bombers (the Soviet DB-3, the English Wellington, the German Heinkel-111) raised bombs of a unit weight of 1-2 tons. With the advent of ammunition of such a unit power, the eternal competition of "sword and shield" was finally and irrevocably decided in favor of the "sword". Strictly speaking, with an unimaginable amount of concrete and steel reinforcement, it is possible to build a DOS that can withstand a direct hit from a heavy air bomb, but no country can afford to waste resources on the construction of "man-made mountain ranges." With the advent of bomber aircraft, long-term fortification became "long-term" in only one sense - in terms of the time spent on building reinforced concrete monsters. The time required to destroy any line of fortifications is no longer "long" on a strategic scale. But the cover operation of mobilization, concentration and deployment should not be long. A-priori. The cover operation is a matter of days, which it was quite possible to win,

having previously spent months and years on the construction of DOS. This simple theory has been fully confirmed by practice. Not to mention the textbook example of the "Mannerheim Line" (a rare chain of machine-gun DOSs with primitive casemate equipment or without it at all), the breakthrough of which took more than 30 days in February - March 1940, the garrisons of many DOSs of Grodno, Osovets, Brest, Rava-Russian, Przemysl fortified areas desperately resisted until June 26-27. Several DOSs of the Rava-Russian UR held the defense until June 29,

repulsing numerous enemy infantry attacks, using heavy artillery, 88-mm anti-aircraft guns and flamethrower tanks. The Germans had already occupied Minsk and Bobruisk, but the 3rd company of the 17th artillery battalion of the Brest UR held four DOS on the banks of the Bug near the town of Semyatyche until June 30, 41. Eight days. More was not required for the complete mobilization and deployment of the troops of the Western

Front a ... Returning to the starting point of this chapter, the main thing should be emphasized once again: covering the deployment and defending the border (country, district) are different in content, goals and timing of the operation . On this issue, I am ready to fully agree with the opinion of Comrade Gareev, when he writes: *"The troops of the border military districts had tasks not for defensive operations, but only for covering the deployment of troops."* (44, p. 128) This difference is also clearly reflected in Soviet operational planning documents. So, the April (1941) Directive prescribed to develop: "... a) a cover and defense plan for the

entire period of concentration; b) a plan for the concentration and deployment of front troops; c) the plan for the implementation of the first operation of the 13th and 4th armies and the defense plan of the 3rd

and 10th armies ... " As you can see, the compilers (and executors) of the Directive quite clearly distinguish between the concepts of "cover plan" and "defense plan". The cover was to be carried out along the entire length of the front at the time of the concentration and deployment of troops. Defense in passive sectors (3rd and 10th Armies) was organically included in the general operational plan of the first operations of the Western Front (offensive by the forces of the 4th and 13th Armies from Bielsk-Brest to Warsaw-Radom and defense by the forces of the 10th

and 3rd Army in the center and on the northern flank of the front). Among the many differences between cover plans and strategic defense plans, the most important (and having the most severe consequences in June 1941) is the order in which these plans are put into action. Continuing the line of comparing cover with guard duty, we will immediately see this fundamental difference. The guard(s) carry out their service to protect the object continuously, around the clock and all year round.

it is not required. The order of actions of the sentry in the event of an attack (or even an attempt to attack) a protected object is known and simple:

a) Wait, who's coming? b) Stop, I'll shoot! c) A warning shot in the air, and after that - fire on defeat. No

further instructions. No orders from higher authorities. The sentry not only has the right, but is also obliged to make a decision on the use of weapons on his own.

With the cover plan, it's exactly the opposite. And this is not an accident or a mistake. Cover operations are nothing but the beginning of a war. It's a genie that can't be put back in the bottle. And not only because the Soviet cover plans for the summer of 1941 involved massive air strikes on the adjacent territory. The very complex of actions for mobilization, concentration and operational deployment of troops - to cover which the corresponding plan is put into action - is so voluminous and noticeable that the enemy will inevitably begin to react to its beginning. Mobilization is war. And the introduction of the cover plan into action is nothing more than the actual beginning of the war, which cannot be hidden from the enemy. There would be nothing terrible in this **if it were planned to conduct a defensive war**. And let the enemy see, let him know: the borders are locked! *"Let the enemy who hid in ambush remember: / We are on the alert, we are watching the enemy."* Beautiful song. Yes, only her next line (*"We don't want an inch of foreign land, / But we won't give up our own"*) by the summer of 1941 was already outdated. Stalin was planning another war, a war that was to start with a devastating surprise blow from the Red Army. Naturally, the top leadership of the country reserved the right to choose the moment of delivering this blow to itself, and only to itself. *"The cover plan is put into effect upon receipt of an encrypted telegram for mine, a member of the Main Military Council, Chief of the General Staff with the following signatures:*

"Proceed to implement the cover plan of 1941." This standard phrase ended all the directives for the development of a cover plan sent by the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR to the military districts.

Generals, commanders of armies, corps and divisions had no right not only to put into operation, but also to familiarize themselves with the contents of the "red package" without the sanction of the high command. *"Folders and packages with cover documents are opened by written or telegraphic order: in the armies - by the Military Council of the District, in formations - by the Military Council of the Army",* (6. p. 233) Thus, in the absence of operational defense plans, the possibility of an **organized reflection** of a sudden preemptive the enemy's strike depended on whether the top leadership had time to convey to the district headquarters these four short words: "Introduce the cover plan." Has this command been issued? And if not, why not?

Incredibly, even 66 years later, we do not have an exact answer to these simple questions. All that is left to offer the reader is another hypothesis, which we will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter

11 JUNE 23: M DAY

Before starting a discussion of the mysterious events of the last peaceful days of June 41st, one should decide on what today is called the "issue price". And before proceeding to a discussion of this "price", I must apologize for the forced cynicism of the further presentation. Of course, from a normal human point of view, "minor losses" do not happen. Even the death of one person is a tragedy, and for the families of the Red Army soldiers, to whose homes the first "funeral" of the war came, these victims became the greatest grief in their lives.

Understanding all this, I ask readers to understand that military history is written in its own, rather specific language. Living people in this language are called "personnel", killed people - "losses in manpower", mass graves - "sanitary burial". And in this language, the outcome of the first day of the war (June 22, 1941) can be described as follows: using the factor of tactical surprise, the enemy pressed the Soviet troops in several directions. That's all. **Nothing fateful happened on June 22. And it couldn't happen.** Neither at the operational, nor - even more so - at the strategic level. Not the scale of the event. Not the same spatial scope. To destroy or at least significantly weaken the first strike of an army dispersed over the vast expanses of the Soviet Union, an army that included three hundred divisions, thousands of reinforced concrete pillboxes, many hundreds of airfields, tens of thousands of guns, tanks and aircraft, was possible only in one and only way : a massive nuclear missile strike. Fortunately for all of us, Hitler did not have an atomic bomb. V-2

ballistic missiles and jet bombers existed in the summer of 1941 only in the form of blueprints. Of the 115 divisions of the invading army, three-quarters were infantry. With horse-drawn artillery. Wehrmacht soldiers crossed the border rivers on foot (or on bicycles). On bridges that still had to be built (or captured and held). The estimated pace of the march (march, not offensive!) of an infantry division is 20 km per day. Without regard to time

needed to cross the rivers, and without taking into account the resistance of the Red Army, which also participated in the hostilities on June 22. Add to this the maximum firing range of the main German field artillery systems (10–20 km), and we get the value of the maximum possible depth of the “kill zone” on the first day of the war: 20–30 km. At least 4/5 of all divisions of the Red Army were **OUTSIDE this zone**, at distances of 50-500-5000 kilometers from the border. They learned about the beginning of the war not from the shells of German artillery falling on the military camp, but from Molotov's speech on the radio (as hundreds of memoirs tell about this). Even the complete loss of those 30-35 divisions that ended up in the border zone on the first day of the war could not have catastrophic consequences for the Red Army with its cash and mobilization potential. But the Germans could not, with all their desire, destroy 30 divisions with infantry fire in one day. If this were possible, if the infantry (rifle) division of the early 40s had such firepower, then the entire Second World War would have ended in one month. Due to the complete mutual extermination of the parties. Let's not forget that the biggest defeats of 1941 (Kiev and Vyazemsky "cauldrons") did not take place on the first day, not in the first week, and not even in the first month of the war, but the divisions defeated in these "cauldrons" (for rare exceptions) were not only not victims of the "surprise attack" - many of them did not exist at all at the time of June 22. No less devastating than the defeats of 1941 were the defeats of the Soviet troops in the Crimea and near Kharkov in the spring of 1942, although in the second year of the war it's certainly not necessary to talk about “peacefully sleeping airfields” and “non-mobilization of the army” ...

That is why the discussion of the "mystery of June 22" is by no means the main component of the question of the causes of the catastrophic defeat of the Red Army in the summer of 1941. This "mystery" - no matter how much it attracted the attention of historians and publicists - is just **one of the particular problems** of the historiography of the initial period of the war. This problem deserves, in my opinion, discussion, but this discussion should be freed from the halo of fateful supersignificance.

Having decided on the "price of the issue", we will try to formulate its essence as accurately as possible. The problem boils down to the fact that in the last days of peace (approximately from June 13 to June 22, 1941), the top military-political leadership of the USSR **took actions (or no less inaction), inadequate to the current military-political situation.** And this despite the fact that - as today absolutely it is known for sure - information about the impending invasion of German troops at the disposal of Stalin, Molotov, Timoshenko, Zhukov was more than enough.

What exactly were these "inadequate" actions and inaction?

First and foremost, four words were never spoken. The directive (*"before mine, a member of the Main Military Council, the chief of the General Staff"*) on **the introduction of a cover plan** into the headquarters of the western border districts before the start of hostilities **was never received.** Instead of a short, prearranged phrase ("Introduce a cover plan"), in the late evening of June 21, 1941, Timoshenko and Zhukov (and, in fact, Stalin) sent a whole essay to the districts, which was included in historiography under the name "Directive No. 1". Here is its full text: *"1. During June 22–23, 1941, a sudden attack by the Germans on the fronts of the LVO, PribOVO, ZopOVO, KOVO, OdVO is possible. The attack may start with provocative actions.*

2. The task of our troops is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications. At the same time, the troops of the Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kyiv and Odessa military districts should be in full combat readiness, to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies.

I ORDER: a)

during the night of June 22, 1941, covertly occupy fire points of fortified areas on the state border;

b) before dawn on June 22, 1941, disperse all aviation, including military aviation, over field airfields, carefully disguise it; c) put all units on combat

readiness. Troops to keep dispersed and disguised;

d) put air defense on alert without additional rise in assigned composition.

Prepare all measures to darken cities and objects; e) no other activities

are to be carried out without special instructions. (6. p. 424)

Discussion and analysis

of the meaning of this ambiguous, like the prophecy of Nostradamus, text has been going on for more than half a century. Some argue that the main thing in the Directive is the requirement "not to succumb to provocations". Others reasonably object, pointing to the phrase "to meet a possible German strike." Still others rightly point to the apparent ambiguity of the Directive: how can one "meet the Germans' blow" without carrying out "any other measures" than dispersal and camouflage? And what does it mean to "meet the blow"? Where to meet? How to meet? At what lines, in what battle formations, according to what operational plans, with what restrictions in actions? It seems that the high command offered their subordinates to solve some kind of puzzle. In conditions of the most severe shortage of time (and with a very high probability of arrest and execution in case of an incorrect answer), the commanders of the districts were instructed to guess; how "provocative actions" differ from "surprise strike"... And all this - instead of a simple, clear and unambiguous order: "Introduce a cover plan." Moreover, even at the moment when the attack became a fait accompli, Moscow did not give a

direct and clear order to put the cover plan into action. Here is how the events of the first minutes of the war are described in the testimony of the former commander of the Western Front, D. G. Pavlov (minutes of the first interrogation of July 7, 1941):

"... At one in the morning on June 22 of this year. By order of the People's Commissar of Defense, I was summoned to the headquarters of the front. A member of the Military Council, Corps Commissar Fominykh, and Chief of Staff of the Front, Major General Klimovskikh, came with me. The people's commissar asked the first question on the phone: "Well, how are you, calmly?" I replied that a very large movement of German troops was observed on the right flank: according to the report of the commander of the 3rd Army, Kuznetsov, for a day and a half, German

motorized mechanized columns. According to his own report, in the Avgustov-Sapotskin section, in many places, the Germans removed the barrage wire ... The People's Commissar replied

*to my report: "Be calm and don't panic, just in case, gather the headquarters this morning, maybe **something something unpleasant will happen** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), but look, do not go for any provocation. If there are separate provocations, call." This conversation ended ... "* So, in addition to hundreds of other reports that came to the General Staff of the Red Army, the commander of the troops of the border district reports that the

enemy has removed the wire barriers and columns of tanks and motorized infantry are continuously marching towards the border. There is a connection between Minsk and Moscow, and it works steadily. Commissar's order - do not panic. At the same time, Tymoshenko for some reason suggests that on the morning of June 22 "something unpleasant may happen." Did he really use these words to indicate a possible attack by a 3-million-strong German army?

"... At 3:30, the people's commissar of defense called me on the phone again and asked - what's new? I answered him that now

there is nothing new, I have established communication with the armies and the corresponding instructions have been given to the commanders ... " Once again, we note that the connection is working steadily, no one (neither in Moscow, nor in Minsk, nor in Grodno, nor in Bialystok, not in Kobrin) does not sleep, the order to attack was brought to the attention of three million soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht more than 10 hours ago (which should have been recorded by Soviet military intelligence), at least two German defectors, risking their lives and their families, swam across border Bug and informed the commanders of the Red Army about the beginning of the war. But Moscow stubbornly refuses to utter the four cherished words: "Introduce the cover plan." The strange "inhibition" of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR becomes especially contrasting if we compare his actions

with the actions of another people's commissar - People's Commissar of the Navy N. G. Kuznetsov. In his memoirs, N. G. Kuznetsov describes the night of June 21-22 as follows: *"..At about 11 pm (June 21) the phone rang. I heard*

the voice of Marshal S. K. Timoshenko:

- There is very important information. Come to me.

He quickly put the latest data on the situation in the fleets into a folder and, having called Alafuzov (deputy chief of the Main Naval Staff. - M.S.), went with him ... Our people's commissariats were located in the neighborhood ... A few minutes later we were already going up the second floor of a small mansion, where the office of S. K. Timoshenko was temporarily located. Marshal, pacing the room, dictated. Army General G.K. Zhukov was sitting at the table and writing something Semyon Konstantinovich noticed us and stopped. Briefly, without naming sources, he said that a German attack on our country was considered possible. Zhukov got up and showed us the telegram he had prepared for the border districts... Having run through the text of the telegram, I asked: "Is it allowed to use weapons in case of an attack?" - Allowed. I turn

to Rear Admiral Alafuzov: "Run to headquarters and immediately instruct the fleets about full actual readiness, that is, readiness number one. Run! **There was no time to discuss whether it was convenient for the admiral to run along the street.**

Vladimir Antonovich ran (underlined by me. - M.S.), I myself lingered for another minute, clarified whether I understood correctly that attacks could be expected that night. Yes, that's right, on the night of the 22nd

June...

... I was informed: an emergency order has already been transmitted. It is very short - a signal by which the locals know what to do. **Nevertheless, it takes some time to pass the telegram, and it is expensive. I take the telephone.** First call to the Baltic:

- Without waiting for the telegram that has already been sent to you, transfer the fleet to operational readiness number one - combat. I repeat once again - fighting! ... For me, the time

of tedious waiting has come. The fleets knew what to do. Emergency measures were precisely defined and worked out ... Perhaps General Moltke was right when he said that, having given the order to mobilize, you can go to sleep. Now the machine was already working by itself..." (62) For such cases, Soviet "historians" have long prepared

a universal explanation: "It was erroneously admitted..."

But this case is special: he pulled and pulled, but he did not give the order to put the cover plan into effect (and this at a time when the Germans, without hiding, were removing wire fences on the border), not the "stupid" Voroshilov, but Zhukov himself, Great and Terrible. For a special occasion, they came up with a special "excuse": it turns out that the whole thing is not in the mind, but in "courage". N. G. Kuznetsov was not afraid to violate some "Stalin's order" (what? About what?), But the Invincible Marshal ... Let's just say, he saved himself for future victories ... To the surprising at first glance contrast between the actions of naval and land commanders, we we'll be back, and

now we'll continue reading the protocol of Pavlov's interrogation: *"... Kuznetsov called me on the phone, reporting: "There is artillery and machine-gun fire on the entire front. There are up to 50-60 aircraft over Grodno, the headquarters are being bombed, I am forced to go to the basement." I told him by phone **to enter "Grodno-41" (the conditional password of the cover plan) into the case** (underlined by me. - M.S.) and act without hesitation, take the right place with the headquarters ... At about 4.10 - 4.15 I spoke with Korobkov (commander of the troops of the 4th Army. - M.S.), who also replied: "Everything is calm with us." After about 8 minutes, Korobkov reported that "aircraft attacked Kobrin, terrible artillery fire at the front." I suggested to Korsakov **to bring "Kobrin 41 years old" into the case** and ordered to keep the troops in hand, to begin to act with full responsibility. Everything that the commanders reported to me, I immediately and accurately reported to the people's commissar of defense.*

*The latter replied: "**Act as the situation dictates.**" (6. pp. 457–458) Why? Why then do we need the General Staff, the People's Commissariat of Defense, why were multi-page plans written ("Top Secret", "Special Importance", "The Only Copy")? Only in order to engage in creative improvisation at a crucial moment ("**Act as the situation dictates**")? A similar response was received from Zhukov and the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral F. S. Oktyabrsky. It was on Sevastopol that the very first strike of German aviation hit. By that time, the Black Sea Fleet had already been transferred to combat readiness No. 1, but the fleet commander decided for some reason to request permission to use weapons in the People's Commissariat of Defense (which*

the fleet was not formally subordinate, having its own people's commissar and its own Main Naval Headquarters). Zhukov, without a shadow of embarrassment, describes the telephone

conversation that took place as follows: (15, p. 264) *At 3:07 AM, the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral Oktyabrsky, called me on HF and said: "The Fleet's VNOS system reports on the approach from the sea of a large number of unknown aircraft; The fleet is in full combat readiness. I ask for instructions." I asked*

the admiral: "Your decision?" (An

amazing response from a senior commander! Instead of cheering up a bewildered admiral with a short but harsh reminder that *"emergency measures are precisely defined and worked out"* and the command of the fleet - already transferred to Operational Readiness No. 1 - knows perfectly well, *"what should be done"*, Zhukov immediately hides behind someone else's decision. - M.S.) - *There is only one solution: to meet the aircraft with the fire of the fleet's air defense. After talking with*

S. K. Timoshenko, I replied to Admiral F. S. Oktyabrsky: - Act and report to your people's commissar (i.e., save us from

Timoshenko from responsibility for this conversation - M.S.).

Let us return again to the testimony of D. G. Pavlov. The commander of the ZAPOVO, like any other commander of the troops of the district (front), did not have the right, on his own initiative, to give those orders for the introduction of cover plans that he gave to the commanders of the 3rd, 4th (and then 10th) Armies. Nevertheless, Tymoshenko does not react in any way to this "arbitrariness" of her subordinate, in fact, completely withdrawing from decision-making. However, the first combat order of the command of the Western Front, preserved in the archives (TsAMO, f. 208, op. 2454, d. 26. l. 76), consists of only two phrases and does not contain any mention of the cover plan: *"In view of the Germans mass military actions I order: Raise the troops and act in a military way. (52, p. 16) There is a note on the document: "Dispatched on June 22, 1941, 5 hours 25 minutes" (and not at 4.25, as follows from Pavlov's testimony). Memoir literature*

contains evidence that in a number of units and formations "red packets" were opened in the very first hours of the war **or even before it began, at 2-3 am on June 22**. An incomparably greater number of facts testify to complete chaos and confusion. Starting from the well-known episode from F. Halder's "War Diary" that *"border bridges across the Bug and other rivers were everywhere captured by our troops without a fight and in complete safety ... advanced units, suddenly attacked by our troops, asked the command that them to do ... "*, and to the much less well-known memories of Lieutenant General V.P. Bulanov, who met the war as the navigator of the crew of the Ar-2 bomber in the 46th BAP (PribOVO): "... At 4.30 we were alerted. - Like

what? Do not say anything. At about 5

o'clock they give the first task: to bomb the Germans who are forcing the Neman River in the Tilsit region. The first squadron takes off, the second takes off - nine aircraft each. We take off with the third squadron. The first nine bombed, the second bombed ... We were already approaching the Neman, and suddenly the team was to return. We return with a full bomb load. We sit down ... "

Landing an aircraft with bombs is a gross violation of all flight rules. Such a decision - as well as an even more surprising return from the combat route - could only be taken in an atmosphere of general insanity ...

So, the first and most important of the "riddles of June 22" is the lack of a command to put into action cover plans in the presence of these plans themselves, carefully developed and repeatedly refined, in the safe of each commander.

The absence of an order to put into effect the cover plan for mobilization and deployment was "organically supplemented" **by the absence of an order to start open mobilization**. Mobilization in the USSR was announced not before the start of the war, and not even on the day the war began, but on the second day, June 23, 1941. This is an absolutely impossible, incredible situation. This was not the case anywhere: Germany and Poland, France and Finland, Italy and Belgium - all these countries began mobilization in a few days or even a few weeks.

before the start of the war. The only exception to the rule was the Soviet Union, i.e., precisely the country that for many years was preparing for a large-scale war on a scale unthinkable for its neighbors. The absence of an order for general mobilization before the start of hostilities can still be explained by the unwillingness to "frighten off Hitler" before the deadline prepared for him in Moscow. But the absence of an order to start mobilization on June 22 is a phenomenon that goes beyond all reasonable limits. The mobilization activities of the first day of mobilization ("Day M") were scheduled by the hour. Each hour of delay gave the enemy additional advantages. Nevertheless, here is the full text of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: *"Based on Article*

49 of Clause "L" of the Constitution of the USSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet announces mobilization on the territory of the military districts - Leningrad, Baltic Special, Western Special, Kiev Special, Odessa, Kharkov, Orlovsky, Moscow, Arkhangelsk, Ural, Siberian, Volga, North Caucasian and Transcaucasian. Those liable for military service who were born from 1905 to 1918 inclusive are subject to mobilization.

Consider June 23, 1941 as the first day of mobilization. (I emphasized. - MS) Chairman
of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Council
M. Kalinin Secretary of the Presidium of the
USSR Supreme Council A. Gorkin

Moscow. Kremlin, June 22, 1941" This is the full text of the Decree. From start to finish. The announcement of mobilization from June 23rd is an action so incredible that the authors of many historical books, without much discussion, call the date of the beginning of mobilization "natural and understandable" June 22nd. Nevertheless, the text of the Decree was published in all central newspapers, and anyone who wishes can personally read this amazing phrase (**"consider June 23 the first day of mobilization"**), lifting up the yellowed newspapers of the 41st year. G.K. Zhukov also perfectly understands the absurdity of the situation of NOT announcing mobilization on the day the war began, therefore he selflessly lies in his memoirs:

"...WITH. K. Timoshenko called I. V. Stalin and asked permission to come to the Kremlin to report on the draft Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the mobilization and formation of the Headquarters of the High Command, as well as a number of other issues. JV Stalin replied that he was busy at a meeting of the Politburo and could only receive it at 9 o'clock. (Interestingly, in the early morning of June 22, could be more important for the notorious "Politburo" than the report of the leadership of the Armed Forces? What was the "Politburo" doing during these hours - reading aloud selected passages from the correspondence between Kautsky and Bebel? - M.S.) ... The people's commissar's car and mine covered the short way from the people's commissariat to the Kremlin at extremely high speed. We were met by A. I.

Poskrebyshv and immediately escorted to the office of I. V. Stalin. (15, p. 268) What do you think, dear reader, how long could this trip "at extremely high speed" from one building in the center of Moscow to another take? If this testimony of Zhukov were true, then Poskrebyshv would have opened the door to the Boss's office for Timoshenko and Zhukov at about 9:20. It doesn't take more than 20 minutes to drive from house to house, present documents to the guards and run up the stairs. Alas, the "Journal of Visits" silently but firmly convicts Zhukov of a lie: both he and Timoshenko entered Stalin's office at 14.00. At two o'clock in the afternoon. The marshal's car raced for five hours. During this time, "at extremely high speed" it was possible to even reach the headquarters of

the Western Front in Minsk ... At 16.00 Timoshenko, Zhukov, Kulik, Vatutin and Shaposhnikov left Stalin's office. "The telegram announcing the mobilization was signed by the People's Commissar of Defense on June 22, 1941 at 16:00 and handed over to the Central Telegraph of the Ministry of Communications at 16:40. The transmission of the mobilization telegram to all republican, krai, oblast and district centers, provided for by the mobilization notification scheme, took 26 minutes

*(from 4:47 pm to 5:13 pm)" (3, p. 107) Returning to the text of the fateful Decree (a after all, he actually determined the fate of millions of people), we find **the absence in it of any mention of the invasion of German troops that has already taken place**, of the treacherous attack of the*

the sacred duty of the defenders of the Motherland... In itself, this lack of emotion in an official document could be considered natural. It could - if we had not had other, no less official documents on June 22 at our disposal. The first comparison shows that such a cold-clerical style was not at all typical for that day. Not at all. Here, for example, in what terms was the official statement of the Soviet government read by Molotov on the radio at 12 noon on June 22, 1941 : *on the Soviet Union falls entirely on the German fascist rulers ... Our troops*

were ordered to repel the robber attack and drive the German troops from the territory of our Motherland ... This war was imposed on us not by the German people, not by the German workers, peasants and intelligentsia, whose suffering we understand well , but by a clique of the bloodthirsty fascist rulers of Germany .. " The emotionality of the above text is understandable and, let's say, "functionally justified ". This statement was not only an official expression of the position of the USSR government, but also an appeal to the people. But here we have the text of Directive No. 62, sent to the western districts at 7.15 on

June 22. This is already a top secret document addressed to the military councils of the districts. No one, except for 15 recipients and three authors (Tymoshenko, Malenkov, Zhukov), could read it. This is by no means a document of military Propaganda. But in what excited expressions it is composed!

"On June 22, 1941, at 4 o'clock in the morning, German aviation, without any reason, raided our airfields and cities along the western border and bombarded them. At the same time, German troops opened artillery fire in different places and crossed our border. In connection with the

unheard-of impudence attack from Germany against the Soviet Union I ORDER:

Troops to attack the enemy forces with all their strength and means and destroy them in areas where they violated the Soviet border.

Reconnaissance and combat aviation to establish the places of concentration of enemy aviation and the grouping of his ground forces.

Destroy aircraft at enemy airfields and bomb groupings of his ground forces with powerful strikes by bomber and attack aircraft.

Apply air strikes to the depth of German territory up to 100–150 km.

Bomb Königsberg and Memel. To the territory of Finland and Romania until further notice don't fly." (6, p. 432)

Neither in form nor in content Directive No. 2 does not at all correspond to the statutory norms for drawing up combat orders. There is a standard, and it must be followed. This standard is set not by someone's literary tastes, but by Art. 90 of the Field Manual PU-39 (*"The first paragraph of the order gives a concise description of the actions and the general grouping of the enemy ... The second paragraph indicates the tasks of the neighbors and the borders with them. The third paragraph gives the formulation of the task of the connection and the decision of the commander giving the order ... In the subsequent paragraphs, particular tasks are set (immediate and subsequent) to subordinate formations..."*) From the standpoint of these statutory requirements, Directive No. 2 is nothing more than an emotional (if not hysterical) cry: "Piss the goats!" Collapse and destroy is not a combat order. Where is the enemy? What are his powers? With what forces, in what grouping, is it necessary to "collapse"? In what directions? How long does it take to "destroy"? At what frontiers? Why was the main task of the Air Force "to bomb Koenigsberg and Memel (Klaipeda)"? And since when did the combat order discuss the "unheard of arrogance of the enemy"?

Against the background of such documents, the distantly cold style and syllable of the Decree of the Presidium of the Armed Forces cannot but surprise. Although, let's repeat this again, the most incredible thing is not the style and style, but the announcement of mobilization from the 2nd day of the war!

The absence of an order to put the cover plan into action and the belated announcement of mobilization are the two main "oddities", the main and inexplicable manifestations of the inaction of the country's top leadership. In addition to these main events (inaction is also an event), there is still a large mass of private facts, events and documents that, in their uniformity

and multiplicity cannot but lead to certain reflections and assumptions. Conventionally, these strange facts can be divided into two groups: - events that can

be interpreted as **a secret introduction of a cover plan**; - events indicating **an actual or demonstrative decrease in the level of combat readiness of the armed**

forces.

According to normal human logic, the first point cannot be combined with the second point. It's either-or. Either we deploy an army for battle, or we declare a general retreat. And yet, contrary to all logic, both processes were going on simultaneously!

The most significant manifestation of the process of "covert and gradual" introduction of district cover plans into action is **the creation of front-line directorates and their deployment to field command posts**. The formation of active fronts on the basis of district troops, the withdrawal of front headquarters from district centers (Riga, Minsk, Kyiv, Odessa) to field command posts - this is war. The huge and noisy army of "anti-Suvorovites" has not yet come up with any other explanations for these facts. In peacetime, fronts were never created in the USSR (the Far Eastern Front, deployed since the late 1930s, can only serve as an example of an "exception that proves the rule" - the border with Japan-occupied China continuously flared up with either large or small armed conflicts). And, on the contrary, the fronts and their headquarters were created before each "liberation campaign" (September 11, 1939 - six days before the invasion of Poland, January 7, 1940 - after the "triumphant march on Helsinki" turned into a real war, June 9, 1940 - nineteen days before the occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina). All this is not new. Fifteen years ago, the text of the draft decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of June 21, written by Malenkov in his own hand, was published. This document specifically says:

"... Appoint Commander of the Southern Front ... Entrust Comrade Zhukov with the overall leadership of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts ... Entrust Comrade Meretskov with the overall leadership of the Northern Front ... Appoint a member of the Military Council of the Northern Front ..." (6. p.

As you can see, already on June 21, secret documents wrote about the fronts as real-life units. Then, on June 21, a decision was made on the actual formation of another one, the Reserve Front. In Bryansk, it was supposed to deploy the headquarters of the "armies of the second line", Marshal Budyonny was appointed commander of these armies, a member of the Military Council - the author of the draft resolution, Secretary of the Central Committee

Malenkov. Another thing is more interesting - after the cover plans for the western districts were published in 1996, it became possible to "overlay" the actual dates of the withdrawal of front headquarters on the chronological "grid" of cover plans. The picture emerges as follows. The completion

of the withdrawal of front headquarters to field command posts in all districts was planned for M-3 (that is, by the third day of mobilization). This date is referred to in all district cover plans as the date of release of the headquarters of the neighbors. For example, in terms of covering the Western OVO we read: *"To the right - PribOVO. Headquarters with M-3 - Panevezys (Panevezys). To the left - KOVO. Headquarters with M-3 - Tarnopol.* But M-3 is the process completion time. The front headquarters is a lot of people, a lot of equipment, means of communication, security. The redeployment of all this (especially the secret redeployment) took time, 1-2 days. Accordingly, the first echelons of headquarters began to advance to M-1. For example, in the plan for covering the Baltic OVO, it is written: *"6 hours after the start of the war or the announcement of mobilization, the operational echelon of the headquarters leaves for the location of the headquarters of the North-Western Front, in the sowing forest. Panevezys 8 km.* The situation with the location of the headquarters of the Western Front is not entirely clear. In terms of covering the Kiev OVO, it is said about the northern neighbor: *"The headquarters of the district from the 3rd day of mobilization is Baranovichi."* The same area (more precisely, the Obus-Lesna station near Baranovichi) is also indicated in the April (1941) Directive for the development of a plan for the operational deployment of the Western OVO, but the plan for covering the Western OVO does not say anything about the redeployment of the headquarters from Minsk, and in fact, the headquarters of the district (front) in the first c

Orders to withdraw front headquarters to field command posts by June 22–23 were issued no later than **June 19**. Yes, in telegram

On June 19, 1941, the Chief of the General Staff of June 19, 1941, the commander of the Kiev OVO was told: *"The People's Commissar of Defense ordered: by 06/22/1941, the department should go to Tarnopol, leaving in Kiev the district department subordinate to you ... Keep the separation and transfer of the front management in the strictest confidence what to warn the personal assets of the district headquarters"* (2, p. 88) It is noteworthy that this sensational fact was negligently cut out of the book of memoirs of Marshal Baghramyan, which passed all types of

censorship and was published in 1971: "... On the morning of June 19, G. K. Zhukov's telegram that the People's Commissar of Defense ordered the creation of a front-line administration and transfer it to Tarnopol by June 22 ... Everything was already thought out in advance ... The commander of the district ordered the train train to be sent from Kiev on the evening of June 20, and the main headquarters

convoy - in the first half of the next day " (45) The highest commanders of the Western and Baltic districts did not write memoirs. The command staff of the Western Front (front commander Pavlov, chief of staff Klimovskikh, deputy front air force commander Tayursky, front artillery chief Klich, front communications chief Grigoriev) were arrested and shot. The commander of the Zapfront Air Force, Kopets, shot himself or was killed in his office on June 22. The chief of staff of the Northwestern Front (Baltic OVO) Klenov and the commander of the Air Force of the front, Ionov, were arrested and shot, the head of the operational department of the headquarters (Bagramyan held this position in the Kiev district) of the Northwestern Front, Trukhin, surrendered on June 26, 1941 and was hanged 1 August 1946 Commander of the PribOVO and North-Western Front F.I. Kuznetsov lived as head of the Military Academy of the General Staff until the end of the war, but did not publish

his memoirs. There are no memoirs, but there are documents. For example. Operational report No. 01 dated 22.00 June 21, 1941. The headquarters that issued this report is still called the "PribOVO headquarters", although the number clearly indicates that the document was compiled by a new command instance - the headquarters of the North-Western Front. But something else is more important: the location of the head

On the evening of June 21, the headquarters of the district (front) **was already in the place where it was supposed to be on the M-3.** In the same place, in Panevezys, Intelligence Report No. 02 dated 0.25 on June 22, 1941 was signed. Another noteworthy document was drawn up at 14.30 on June 21. It sets the task *"beginning tonight until further notice to introduce blackout in garrisons and troop locations."* There would be nothing surprising or new in this if it were not for the signature: *"Assistant Commander of the **S-3 Troops.** f. Air Defense Colonel Karlin.* The fact of the existence of the North-Western Front is so badly combined with the fabrications of a "peacefully sleeping country" that the publishers of the document decided to correct this fact (although it would be easier and better not to publish the document). As a result, the document drawn up at the headquarters of the front is entitled: *"Order of the headquarters of the Baltic Special Military District." (64)*

The actual redeployment of troops was not limited to headquarters alone. So, for example, in the plan for covering the Baltic OVO it is said: ***"on the 2nd-4th day of mobilization*** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) *the first mobile echelons of the 126th rifle division are concentrated - in the area of Kazla Ruda, the 23rd rifle division - to the Kaunas region and exits to the Kazla Ruda region.* And in Operational Report No. 1 dated 22.00 June 21, 1941 we read:

"...b) on the night of 22.6.41, the 23rd Infantry Division sets out from the Pagelizhiai area (20 km southwest of Ukmergė) for further movement to the forest area south and southeast of Kaunas;

c) the 126th Rifle Division on the night of 22.6.41 comes out of Zhnezhmoryay and follows to the area of forests near Prena ... "

Translated into the language of a geographical map, this means that the two named divisions are already moving in the direction of the deployment area indicated in the cover plan, and in two to three day's marches they will enter it. And in

the neighboring, Western OVO, a regrouping of troops took place, corresponding to the tasks set by the cover plan for M-3 / M-5. So, regarding the 21st and 47th rifle corps and their divisions, in terms of covering the Western OVO, it is said:

"... The 21st corps, consisting of the 17th and 37th divisions, with M-3, is concentrated on the railway. road in the area ...

47th building corps, consisting of 55th, 121st and 155th divisions from M-3 to M-10 by road, march and railway. road focus